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NHS union chiefs meet to plan joint Christmas strike

Exclusive Action comes amid below-inflation pay offers and staffing crises

Daniel Boffey
Denis Campbell
Pamela Duncan

The NHS will grind to a halt on 20 December under plans being discussed for a coordinated Christmas strike in England and Wales by nurses, ambulance workers and hospital staff.

The unprecedented day of industrial action would leave NHS bosses struggling to keep even the most basic services running to standards patients expect, with many reduced to Christmas Day levels of staffing.

Intensive talks are understood to have taken place between union representatives and the government about how to “avoid loss of life”.

Pay offers substantially lower than the rate of inflation at a time of a cost of living crisis and dangerously low staffing levels in some areas are part of the rationale for industrial action, unions say. No 10 urged them to consider the impact on patients.

The prime minister’s spokesperson said: “We are concerned about the impact strikes by multiple unions will have on the people of this country as we head into the Christmas period. We recognise that these are challenging economic times, but public sector pay awards must be affordable for the taxpayer.”

Three unions - GMB, Unite and Unison - have announced support for strikes but are yet to make public the dates. It is understood the three are holding talks about a coordinated effort. One source said they had expected an announcement as early as today about a strike date from GMB and Unite, but it is understood negotiations are yet to be finalised.

Discussions were continuing yesterday but it is believed that there is growing consensus that striking on 20 December would create maximum impact by joining ambulance workers with more than 100,000 nurses. Unison is 8 →

Call for PM to suspend Mone over PPE claims

Aletha Adu
Political correspondent

Rishi Sunak is facing calls from the main opposition parties to withdraw the Conservative whip from Michelle Mone in the House of Lords after the Guardian revealed that she appears to have gained millions from the profits of a PPE company.

Labour and the Liberal Democrats have both criticised the prime minister’s “staggering” refusal to do so, claiming his pledge to lead a government that acts with “integrity and professionalism” has become an “empty promise”.

A Tory spokesperson in the Lords confirmed that Lady Mone would not have the whip suspended while a National Crime Agency investigation into the company, PPE Medpro, and a Lords standards committee inquiry into the allegations were in progress. “The decision has been made that she will retain the whip,” the spokesperson said.

However, Labour claimed that Sunak’s refusal to act was another failure of integrity. Anneliese Dodds, the party chair, said that “for the many people who lost loved ones during the pandemic, the idea that the Conservatives 2 →



PHOTOGRAPH: STUART FRANKLIN/GETTY IMAGES

Game changers: referees make history in Qatar

Neuza Inês Back, Stéphanie Frappart and Karen Díaz Medina – the first all-female referee team to officiate at a men’s World Cup match – before last night’s Costa Rica v Germany game **Sport** *Page 49* →

Soaring rents making life ‘unaffordable’

Private tenants across UK facing increases of up to 60%, Guardian research reveals

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News

Sunak urged to suspend Mone over PPE row



Michelle Mone was sworn in to the House of Lords as Baroness Mone of Mayfair in 2015
PHOTOGRAPH: STEFAN ROUSSEAU/WPA/GETTY

Continued *from page 1*

and their friends" profited from this "will be sickening". She added: "It is staggering that Baroness Mone still has the Conservative whip. Rishi Sunak, the man who wrote off billions in Covid fraud, has his fingerprints all over this. He lacks the backbone to withdraw the whip, just as he was too weak to sack his home secretary or deputy prime minister for their behaviour. The British people will see this as yet another failure to stand up for integrity and accountability."

Sal Brinton, the Liberal Democrats' spokesperson for health in the Lords, added: "After the revelations about Baroness Mone's financial benefit from the VIP lane during a national health crisis, it is an outrage that the Conservative whip has not yet been removed. This government's pledge to act with 'integrity and professionalism' is quickly becoming an empty promise."

The Green party MP Caroline Lucas said "a thoroughly comprehensive and forensic investigation and an immediate withdrawal of the whip" was warranted: "[The Tories] cannot allow allegations on this scale to be brushed under the carpet for a second longer."

A secret offshore trust which had Mone and her children as its beneficiaries received £29m originating from the profits of PPE Medpro, bank records seen by the Guardian indicate. The firm was awarded large government contracts after the Tory peer helped it to secure a place in a "VIP lane" which the government used to prioritise companies that had political connections.

The government spent more than £13bn on PPE during the pandemic and has been accused of failing to carry out adequate due diligence in awarding contracts, with billions wasted in fraud and on unused

> ***'The British people will see this as yet another failure by Sunak to stand up for integrity and accountability'***
>
> **Anneliese Dodds**
> *Labour party chair*

equipment. Ministers say they were under pressure to buy PPE where they could because of global shortages.

The high court ruled earlier this year that the government had acted unlawfully in operating a special VIP lane for suppliers of PPE who had links with politicians, stating that its operation was "in breach of the obligation of equal treatment".

Asked by the Guardian last year why Mone did not include PPE Medpro in her House of Lords register of financial interests, her lawyer replied: "Baroness Mone did not declare any interest as she did not benefit financially and was not connected to PPE Medpro in any capacity."

The leaked documents, produced by HSBC, appear to contradict that statement. They state that Mone's husband, the Isle of Man-based financier Douglas Barrowman, was paid at least £65m in profits from PPE Medpro, and then distributed the funds through a series of offshore accounts, trusts and companies.

The ultimate recipients of the funds, the documents indicate, include the Isle of Man trust that was set up to benefit Mone, who was Barrowman's fiancee at the time, and her children. In October 2020, the documents add, Barrowman transferred to the trust £28.8m originating from PPE Medpro profits.

That was just five months after Mone helped PPE Medpro secure contracts to supply masks and sterile gowns for use in the NHS.

Contacted about the new disclosures, HSBC said it was unable to comment, even to confirm if the couple had been clients. A lawyer for Mone said: "There are a number of reasons why our client cannot comment on these issues and she is under no duty to do so."

A lawyer who represents both Barrowman and PPE Medpro said that a continuing investigation limited what his clients were able to say on these matters.

He added: "For the time being we are also instructed to say that there is much inaccuracy in the portrayal of the alleged 'facts' and a number of them are completely wrong."

Migrants called to Home Office interviews sent away unseen

Diane Taylor

Dozens of asylum seekers who were recently moved out of Manston were left stranded outside Home Office centres yesterday after being invited to "phantom" appointments they were turned away from, the Guardian has learned.

It follows an earlier crisis exactly a month ago when 11 asylum seekers were left in the street close to London's Victoria station after being moved out of Manston, the controversial reception centre for small-boat arrivals in Ramsgate, Kent.

Dozens of asylum seekers received a letter headed Asylum and Protection Manston from the Home Office, instructing them to attend asylum interviews yesterday "to tell us about the reasons why you have claimed asylum in the UK".

Many were invited to appointments at the Home Office's visa and immigration headquarters, Lunar House in Croydon, and others to another centre in the Midlands.

The appointment letter states that if asylum seekers have concerns or queries they can contact the "above number". But there is no number.

One man stranded outside Lunar House yesterday was one of the group who were previously dumped at Victoria station. He arrived in the UK in October 2022 and spent 23 days at Manston. He slept rough at Victoria for two days after being abandoned there before being given a number for Migrant Help's helpline, which organised hotel accommodation in Colchester for him.

"I am completely disappointed and frustrated that I could not do my interview today," he told the Guardian. "I am lost. The whole situation is inhumane. They could have just given me a text message or a phone call to tell me that my interview was cancelled. I feel like I am not being treated as a human. I have been through so much."

He said there were more than 20 asylum seekers outside Lunar House who had appointment letters but were turned away. "At Lunar House this morning it seemed like no one cared," he said. "We [the asylum seekers] said we would be happy to wait but we were told that was not possible. It felt like it was not a big deal to the Home Office that our interviews had been cancelled."

A second asylum seeker said everyone standing outside was left feeling hopeless.

Many asylum seekers express frustration at having to wait two years or more before they receive an asylum interview appointment from the Home Office. So the group who received the appointment



Asylum seekers were left outside the Home Office's immigration HQ

letter yesterday were surprised but delighted at the progress.

"It was a surprise for me to get my interview so fast, but I was really happy … I was excited because I thought that soon I would be able to start my life again," the first asylum seeker said. "But now we've all been left in limbo."

Usually the Home Office provides travel tickets for those attending official appointments and the asylum seekers given appointments were expecting to receive those. But when this did not happen some phoned the charity Care4Calais in a distressed state. Charity workers purchased travel tickets for them to ensure they did not miss the appointments.

Hannah Marwood, legal access manager at Care4Calais, said: "The people who contacted us for help yesterday had no legal representation and few had the means to get to their appointments, creating significant undue distress," she said. "The level of disorganisation is astounding."

The Home Office was approached for comment. Department sources said: "If an interview has to be rescheduled, individuals can be assured there will be no impact on the outcome of their asylum case."

Akerman's accolade: 70s cult classic is first work by female director to top BFI's list of greatest films



▼ *Wong Kar-wai's In the Mood for Love was voted fifth, up from 24th in 2012, in the list of greatest films*
PHOTOGRAPH: ALBUM/ALAMY

Nadia Khomami
Arts and culture correspondent

It was heralded in 1976 as "the first masterpiece of the feminine in the history of cinema" by Le Monde. Nearly 50 years later, Chantal Akerman's Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles is the first feature by a female film-maker to be named the greatest film of all time by Sight and Sound, the magazine of the British Film Institute (BFI).

Akerman's 70s classic, which follows the meticulous daily routine of a middle-aged widow over three days – including having sex with male clients for her own and her son's subsistence – topped the decennial poll this year, pushing Alfred Hitchcock's Vertigo to second place and Orson Welles' Citizen Kane to third.

The Belgian film-maker was 25 when she shot the experimental, groundbreaking film starring Delphine Seyrig in the main role, and it has since become a cult classic – provoking years of analysis and debate.

"Jeanne Dielman challenged the status quo when it was released in 1975 and continues to do so today," said Mike Williams, the editor of Sight and Sound, which has conducted the poll every decade since 1952. "It's a landmark feminist film, and its position at the top of the list is emblematic of better representation in the top 100 for women film-makers."

Dielman jumped from 36th place in 2012. Williams said the film's success was a reminder that there was "a world of underseen and underappreciated gems out there to be discovered".

In fourth place this year is Yasujiro Ozu's Tokyo Story, while three new films have made it into the Top 10, including Wong Kar-wai's In the Mood for Love in fifth place (up from 24th in 2012), Claire Denis's Beau Travail at No 7 (up from 78th in 2012) and David Lynch's Mulholland Drive in eighth place (up from 28th).



▲ *Delphine Seyrig in Akerman's masterpiece. Right, Spike Lee's Do the Right Thing enters the list*
PHOTOGRAPH: PARADISE FILMS/PHOTO 12/ALAMY



This year's survey was its most ambitious to date, with more than 1,600 of the most influential international film critics, academics, distributors, writers, curators, archivists and programmers voting – almost double the number of participants in 2012. It was eagerly anticipated in the global film community, representing a litmus test for where film culture stands.

In 2012, Vertigo took the No 1 spot from Citizen Kane, which had held it for 50 years. That year, Jeanne Dielman and Beau Travail were the only female film-makers' films in the top 100. But this year's poll features 11 films by female film-makers in the top 100, and four in the top 20.

Furthermore, in 2012 there was one film by a black film-maker listed in the top 100 – Djibril Diop Mambéty's Touki Bouki, at No 93. In 2022, there are seven titles in the top 100 by prominent black film-makers. Touki Bouki has climbed to 67th place, while new entries include Spike Lee's Do the Right Thing in 24th place, Barry Jenkins' Academy award-winning Moonlight in joint 60th place, and Jordan Peele's Get Out and Ousmane Sembène's Black Girl jointly at No 95.

Jason Wood, the BFI's executive director of public programmes and audiences, said: "Canons should be challenged and interrogated and as part of the BFI's remit to not only revisit film history but to also reframe it, it's so satisfying to see a list that feels quite radical."

Top 10
This year's BFI greats

1 *Jeanne Dielman, 23, quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975) Chantal Akerman

2 *Vertigo* (1958) Alfred Hitchcock

3 *Citizen Kane* (1941) Orson Welles

4 *Tokyo Story* (1953) Yasujiro Ozu

5 *In the Mood for Love* (2001) Wong Kar-wai

6 *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) Stanley Kubrick

7 *Beau Travail* (1998) Claire Denis

8 *Mulholland Drive* (2001) David Lynch

9 *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) Dziga Vertov

10 *Singin' in the Rain* (1951) Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly

The goal that vanished: French fans wake up to learn team lost

Alex Reid

When the France striker Antoine Griezmann's last-minute shot crept over the goal line in their final World Cup group match against Tunisia, the scores appeared to be level at 1-1 and fans watching at home saw what they believed had been the dramatic end to a hard-earned draw.

But those watching on broadcaster TF1 will have woken to a shock yesterday morning, finding out that the goal had been disallowed and that France, the reigning champions, had lost the game, and with it their unbeaten record in the tournament.

The confusion came after TF1 mistakenly cut to an ad break after Griezmann's shot, believing the final whistle had sounded in its aftermath and prompting millions of viewers to switch off, relieved. Instead, the referee, Matthew Conger, was belatedly called to consult the pitchside monitor by the VAR video replay officials, and contentiously ruled out the late strike because of Griezmann's offside position earlier in play.

But TF1 had left its audience with footage of French celebrations, continuing its tournament coverage with the show World Cup Mag rather than returning to the stadium.

TF1 issued an apology on social media for its hasty exit, and on World Cup Mag the journalist Grégoire Margotton explained the channel's error to the viewers who remained.

"We were convinced that it was over, everyone was going back to the locker room," Margotton said. "It took a long, long time and Mr Conger, the New Zealand referee, went to consult the VAR. He was told after a very long time that there was an offside by Antoine Griezmann and that goal was therefore disallowed."

However this may not be the end of the story: the French Football Federation says it is ready to file a complaint on the grounds that the last-gasp goal was incorrectly ruled out.



▲ *Griezmann's equaliser was ruled out by VAR after the final whistle*

The FFF did not elaborate on its complaint, but there are two points of contention. Griezmann was clearly offside when Aurélien Tchouaméni crossed, but he latched on to the ball only after the Tunisia defender Montassar Talbi's attempted clearance, by which point he was onside.

Also, the game had restarted from a kick-off, with the referee then appearing to blow for full time, before Conger went to review the footage. Ifab, football's lawmaking body, states that if a game has been restarted after a goal is given, VAR cannot intervene.

A draw would not have changed the group standings, with Tunisia still finishing third and France top and facing Poland in the last 16.

Rental crisis has created 48 council areas now classed as 'unaffordable'

Robert Booth
Michael Goodier

Soaring rents have in effect made life unaffordable for private tenants across large areas of Britain, according to research undertaken for the Guardian.

The analysis shows rents being asked on new listings are up by almost a third since 2019 - and some people are facing increases of up to 60%. Prices in 48 council areas are now classed by the Office for National Statistics as unaffordable when compared with average wages.

The conclusions come amid warnings of a rising wave of evictions, allegations of "price gouging" by some landlords, and fears that "the rental crisis is fast becoming a homelessness emergency".

Tenants in London and Manchester are planning protests this weekend to demand that the government freeze rents as an emergency measure.

Michael Gove, the secretary of state for levelling up, housing and communities, is facing growing calls to finally ban no-fault evictions, used by landlords seeking to raise rents, despite the government having pledged to do so since April 2019. Ministers also face demands to pay more in housing benefit to cover rising costs.

Scotland's first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, announced a rent freeze in September, describing the pressure on household budgets as a "humanitarian emergency". The UK government has resisted rent control, saying last month it would lead to "disinvestment in the sector".

The London Renters Union said its members had reported average rent increases of almost £3,400 a year (21%) - which is described as "rent gouging" - with consumer price inflation at 9.6%.

One union member said he and his partner were forced out when a landlord demanded £8,000 more a year, and he was now working two jobs to pay the extra £200 a month in rent for their new home.

Another said they were sofa surfing after being evicted following an unaffordable rent rise.

"It's a pretty bleak situation to be in when you have 20 years of work behind you and nothing to show for it," one renter in her thirties told the Guardian. She is awaiting bailiffs after refusing to pay a 60% rent rise in an east London property with a leaking roof, taps and rot.

Sarah, 56, a part-time carer in Manchester facing a choice of a 16% rent rise or eviction, said: "Gove isn't moving on anything. It's not good enough. There are people living in damp and disrepair. There is a huge crisis developing."

In Manchester, Bath, Nottingham, Cardiff, Brighton and Exeter, average asking rents now stand at more than 30% of a couple's median income, the level at which the ONS considers rent "affordable", Guardian analysis found.

One in five households in England rent their home and costs have increased rapidly in recent months as the Bank of England increased interest rates.

In June, across Britain, average advertised rents were 5% higher than 12 months earlier, but by October they were up by 12% from 12 months previously, according to figures supplied to the Guardian by the property data company TwentyCi.

The sharp rent rises appear to have been triggered by some landlords passing on rising interest rates, then others following their example, creating a rent ratchet.

"Almost a million private renters are at risk of being kicked out of their home this winter, and more will follow," said Polly Neate, the chief executive of Shelter, which ran a survey suggesting 504,000 private renters had received or been threatened with an eviction notice in the last month, up 80% on the same period last year, and that 482,000 were behind on their rent.

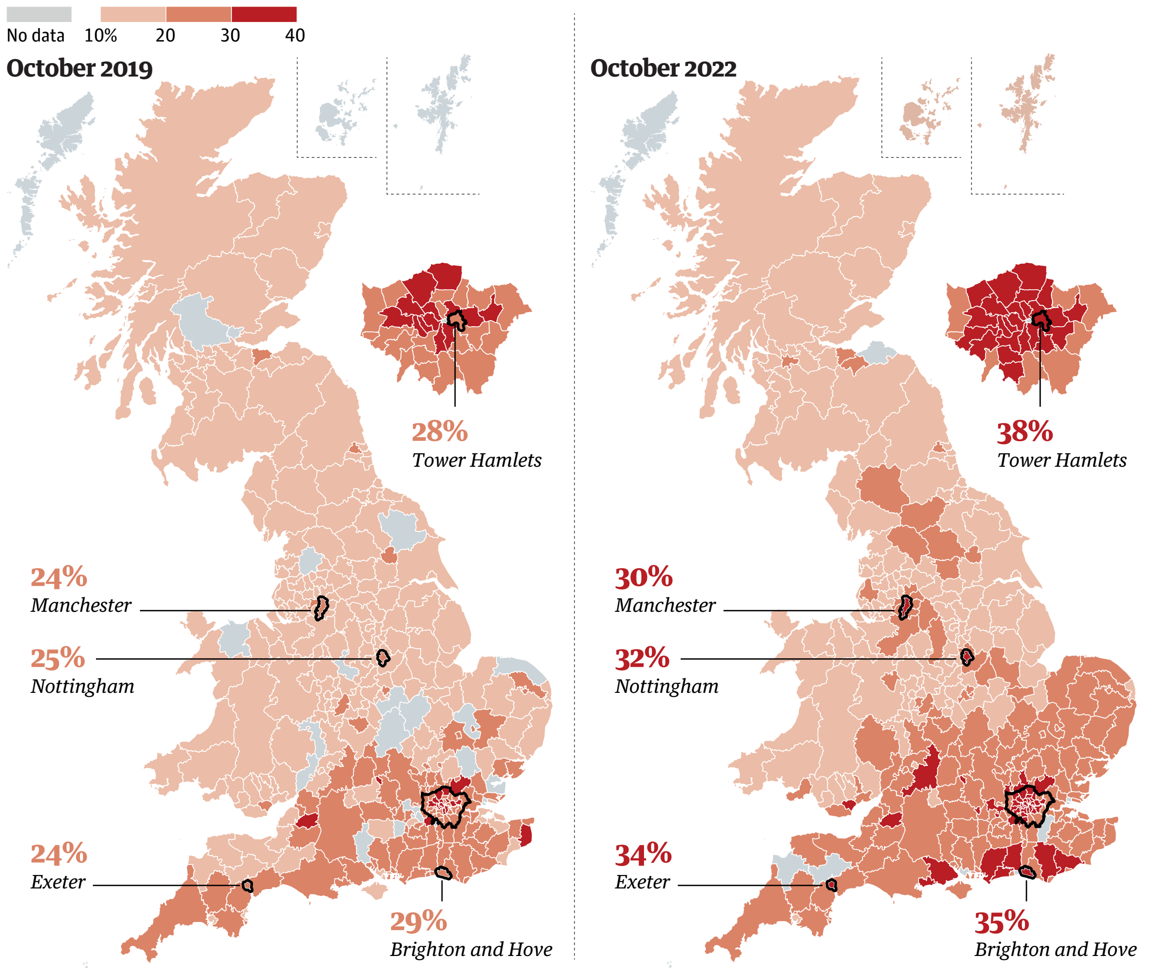
Chris Norris, the policy director for the National Residential Landlords Association, said dwindling supply was to blame for rising rents. He criticised Gove for previously saying he wanted to "shrink the private sector", and said the association was urging him to "reverse course", unfreeze housing benefit and accelerate housebuilding.

A spokesperson for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities cited the energy price guarantee, which lasts until April 2023, as evidence of the help being provided for renters. "Councils have a duty to ensure families are not left without a roof over their heads, and we're giving them £316m this year to help prevent evictions and provide temporary accommodation," they said. "Ensuring a fair deal for renters remains a priority for the government. That's why we will deliver on our commitment to abolish section 21 'no-fault' evictions."

21%
Average annual rent increases in the capital - about £3,400 a year, the London Renters Union reports

Going through the roof

Median market asking rent as proportion of median income for two people



Source: TwentiCi, annual survey of hours and earnings. Grey areas mean there was no wage data

'We are constantly on edge not knowing when we'll be on the street'
Tenants face rising cost of living space

In Manchester, Clara Graziani, 27, a customer services worker, was paying £695 a month on a city centre flat until she was served with an eviction notice in September. Her landlord used the "no fault eviction" process the government has repeatedly pledged to abolish, but still hasn't. Graziani had agreed to pay 8% extra but then, without explanation, she was evicted.

"They didn't have to give a reason," she said. "I was really stressed about the situation."

An estate agent let slip that the landlord's plan was in fact to raise the rent to £895 - a 29% rise - and get someone else in. "It was really, really hard to find somewhere else," Graziani said. "When you see a flat on Rightmove, it could be deleted in two minutes because someone paid a holding deposit." Eventually she paid a deposit on a flat without seeing it in person.

When she finally got in "it smelled a bit of damp in a couple of rooms", she said.

Ygerne Price-Davies, 24, a domestic abuse worker who shares a rented home in south London, is facing eviction unless she and her housemates agree to a 13% rent increase. "We are in negotiations to challenge the increase but it's not looking great," she said. "It's stressful and scary. Because there is such demand for property we feel insecure and weak in terms of



▲ *Clara Graziani was evicted from her home without any explanation*

our bargaining power. They could just evict us." Her housemates include two teachers, a healthcare assistant and a PhD student. The rent demand is made more galling by the fact the home has long been in disrepair with sewage leaking into the kitchen and mushrooms growing out of the ceiling.

Price-Davies, a member of the London Renters Union, said that when the letting agent saw the fungi, they laughed.

Meanwhile in east London, Jane, a freelancer who lives with her charity worker partner, is facing eviction at any moment. They have refused to pay a 60% increase on the rent on her three-bedroom apartment. It is not just a question of fairness. It is simply unaffordable. The £3,000 rent demand is above the couple's total combined income.

The property is also in poor shape. It is not properly registered as a house of multiple occupation, has a leaking roof, a terrace with rotten decking, leaking taps and delaminating kitchen cabinets. The landlord said they had been advised by the estate agent that the market rate was far higher than the current rent.

"We are waiting for the landlord to go to court and send the bailiffs," Jane said. "We are constantly on edge not knowing when we will be on the street. This is the first time [my partner and I] have been living together and we have never been able to relax."

The search for an alternative requires engagement in "constant bidding wars". Recently she had to put down a week's rent as a deposit on a home just for the privilege of making the first bid. Even then it turned out the agent had offered the same arrangement to others. She is yet to receive the deposit back. "Our parents had three-bedroom houses, cars and children [by our age] and we can't afford any of those things," she said. "It's a bleak situation to be in when you have 20-25 years of work behind you and nothing to show for it."
Robert Booth

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▲ *Ian Blackford at PMQs: he became noted for his probing questions to a succession of Conservative leaders*
PHOTOGRAPH: PA

Blackford forced to step down as SNP leader in Westminster

Pippa Crerar
Political editor

The SNP's leader at Westminster, Ian Blackford, has been forced to step down after his own MPs' repeated attempts to oust him in favour of the next generation.

The Scottish politician said it was time for fresh leadership as he confirmed his decision not to stand again at the Westminster group's annual general meeting next week.

The move - which comes after a turbulent few months for Blackford, who has faced plotting from within SNP ranks - is seen by some in the party as a blow to the authority of Nicola Sturgeon, Scotland's first minister, after her closest aides tried to keep him in post.

SNP insiders said Blackford had agreed to quit after aides became aware that Stephen Flynn, the Aberdeen South MP, had the necessary support among Westminster colleagues to oust him.

Some MPs are understood to be rattled by Sturgeon's decision to turn the next general election into a de facto referendum on independence after the supreme court ruled that only the UK government could allow another poll.

Blackford has faced several attempts by his MPs to force him out after a testing year in which he had to defend himself against bullying allegations from an aide and was accused of mishandling sexual harassment claims against Patrick Grady by a young member of staff.

Grady, the MP for Glasgow North, later resigned the party whip after a separate allegation that he had sexually assaulted a teenager in an east London pub. He now sits as an independent in the Commons.

In a statement released moments after he landed at Inverness airport, Blackford said: "After more than five years in the role, now is the right time for fresh leadership at Westminster as we head towards a general election and the next steps in winning Scotland's independence.

"During my time as leader, the SNP won a landslide victory in the 2019 general election, with an increased share of the vote and MPs, and support for independence has continued to grow with polling this week showing a majority in favour."

Sources said Blackford, who has fought off previous challenges, was this week approached by the party's "men in grey suits", who told him it was time for him to stand aside, and then held discussions with officials close to Sturgeon.

The Guardian understands he had also held talks with Flynn after a failed attempt to oust him last month, in which the party's energy spokesperson was said to have informed party officials of his plans before changing his mind.

SNP insiders said Flynn, 34, a former Aberdeen city councillor who entered parliament in 2019, was the favourite to take over the Westminster group next week, and was expected to shake up the party's front bench. Some believe he will be more willing to stand up to what they perceive as interference by Sturgeon's team in Edinburgh.

Joanna Cherry, the MP for Edinburgh South West, who has been at odds with the party's leadership, welcomed Blackford's decision. "It's time for fresh leadership & tolerance of debate & diverse viewpoints," she tweeted. "I hope the SNP Westminster group will be now be left to choose our new leader without outside interference & in accordance with our standing orders."

Blackford has faced internal criticism over what some regard as his closeness to the establishment and his handling of the Grady sexual harassment allegations. He gained a reputation for asking probing questions at prime minister's questions to four different Conservative leaders, will continue as the MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, and will take on a new role leading on business engagement for the independence campaign.

Sturgeon paid tribute to Blackford: "He led the group at a time of huge electoral success for the SNP, particularly at the 2019 general election, and has done an outstanding job in holding the Tory government to account and in promoting the case for independence."



▲ *Nicola Sturgeon: some see the move as a blow to her authority*

Fighting talk
Parliamentary performer

After five years in Westminster Ian Blackford will be remembered for his verbose yet pugnacious speeches in the Commons and the weekly chorus of loud groans he prompted from Conservative MPs at prime minister's questions.

Despite his dogged efforts to hold a series of Conservative prime ministers to account - going toe-to-toe with Boris Johnson in a way that the more cautious Keir Starmer never felt able - the outgoing SNP leader has had a turbulent time with his own MPs, much of it self inflicted.

His handling of sexual harassment claims made against the MP Patrick Grady by a staffer was criticised after a recording showed him urging colleagues to support Grady while failing to mention his victim. This year Blackford, 61, the MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, was himself forced to deny a claim that he had "regularly manhandled" an SNP staffer in the Commons.

Blackford had kicked off 2022 by accusing Johnson of wilfully misleading parliament after Sue Gray's initial report found the Partygate scandal "difficult to justify".

His determination in the Commons often left him open to playground-style insults from MPs, including from Johnson. Yet the pair are said to have enjoyed a cordial private relationship, a fact not lost on some of his backbenchers who viewed what they saw as his "cosy" attachment to Westminster with suspicion.

The outgoing leader has become known for his love of a "stunt" after he was expelled from the chamber by a flustered John Bercow in 2018, after refusing to sit in protest at the failure to debate what he called a Brexit "power grab" from Scotland - prompting a mass walkout.

Blackford has called himself a "humble crofter", but he had a 20-year career in finance before becoming a politician. The Edinburgh-born former banker worked as a managing director for Natwest Securities and was a non-executive chair of a telecommunications firm in 2006.

Blackford defeated Charles Kennedy in 2015 and holds the seat with a majority of just under 10,000 votes. After 20 years in the SNP's political wilderness following criticism of Alex Salmond, then party leader, Blackford staged a comeback, taking over from Angus Robertson as Westminster group leader in 2017. In his time at the helm Blackford was recognised for bringing more SNP politicians to Westminster; the party now holds 45 of the 59 Scottish seats in the Commons. Aletha Adu


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Repainted: new history of art without men wins Waterstones book prize

Sarah Shaffi



▶ *Katy Hessel at the launch of The Story of Art Without Men. She said her goal was not to 'shun' male painters, but to promote equality*
PHOTOGRAPH: HUGH R HASTINGS/GETTY

Katy Hessel's book The Story of Art Without Men, which began as an Instagram account highlighting female artists, has been named Waterstones book of the year. The work was chosen by the retailer's booksellers, who each year vote for the books they have most enjoyed recommending.

The sellers also named Bonnie Garmus, who wrote Lessons in Chemistry, as author of the year, and Skandar and the Unicorn Thief, by AF Steadman, was listed as children's book of the year.

Hessel is an art historian, presenter and curator who set up @thegreatwomenartists on Instagram after visiting an art fair and realising she would struggle to name 20 female artists. She also presents The Great Woman Artists podcast and writes the Great Women's Art Bulletin, a fortnightly column in the Guardian.

Kate Skipper, Waterstones' chief operating officer, called The Story of Art Without Men "as essential as it is enjoyable", saying it was "written with wit and ease" and could be "devoured in one sitting or dipped into on a whim". She added: "This is a book which will be prized for years to come, a feast for the senses as well as the mind."

Hessel said she was "completely overwhelmed" at being awarded Waterstones book of the year but said it was "a testament to all the stories, the untold stories" in her book. "I often think of my book as a kind of party, all these amazing people who have fought everything to be there, and for it to be recognised on this scale is just incredible," she said. The book's title is modelled on The Story of Art by EH Gombrich, which was first published in 1950; that book did not feature any women in its first edition and its most recent edition includes just one.

Reviewing Hessel's book for the Observer, Bidisha Mamata said it should "become a founding text in the history of art by women".

Hessel said: "We live in such a culturally, socially, politically changing time. For millennia, women have been oppressed and I think it's so important we make these corrections. The goal is for equality; it's not to shun men out of our history."

The book covers artists from across the world and, said Hessel, "breaks down the canon in terms of gender, but also breaks down the canon in terms of the hierarchy of art forms, so we have pottery, textile, weaving and sculpture".

Bea Carvalho, head of fiction at Waterstones, said Garmus was recognised as author of the year for "the astronomical success" of her debut novel, Lessons in Chemistry. The novel is about Elizabeth Zott, a chemist, who hosts a cooking show which dares women to change the status quo. "Bonnie has written that rare novel which readers of all tastes will adore: funny yet furious, uplifting yet heartbreaking, it is a deft slice of social history, and a triumphant testament to the craft of fiction writing which underlines how powerful and joyful the genre can be," said Carvalho.

> ***'I think of my book as a party, with all these amazing people'***
>
> **Katy Hessel**
> *Author*

The children's book of the year, Skandar and the Unicorn Thief, is the first in a series and follows Skandar Smith, a character who has only ever wanted to be a unicorn rider.

Florentyna Martin, head of children's books at Waterstones, said Steadman's book was a "lively and original debut" which, with its "fierce unicorn creations and impressive combinations of elemental magic, successfully plays with readers' expectations of the traditional fantasy adventure".

Brains of US teenagers since the pandemic 'show signs of faster ageing'

Nicola Davis
Science correspondent

The brains of teenagers in the US who lived through the Covid pandemic show signs of premature ageing, research suggests.

Researchers compared the MRI scans of 81 young people in the US taken before the pandemic, between November 2016 and November 2019, with those of 82 collected between October 2020 and March 2022, during the pandemic but after lockdowns were lifted.

After matching 64 participants in each group for factors including age and sex, the team found that physical changes in the brain that occur during adolescence – such as thinning of the cortex and growth of the hippocampus and the amygdala – were greater in the post-lockdown group than in the pre-pandemic group, suggesting such processes had speeded up. In other words, their brains had aged faster.

"Brain age difference was about three years – we hadn't expected that large an increase given that the lockdown was less than a year [long]," said Ian Gotlib, a professor of psychology at Stanford University and first author of the study.

Writing in the journal Biological Psychiatry: Global Open Science, the team reported that the participants – a representative sample of adolescents in the Bay Area in California – originally agreed to take part in a study looking at the impact of early life stress on mental health across puberty. As a result, participants were also assessed for symptoms of depression and anxiety.

The post-lockdown group self-reported greater mental health difficulties, including more severe symptoms of anxiety, depression and internalising problems.

Gotlib said the findings chimed with other research on the pandemic's impact on teenagers. "Deterioration in mental health is accompanied by physical changes in the brain for teens, likely due to the stress of the pandemic," he said.

But it is not yet clear whether the poorer mental health captured in the study is driven by faster brain ageing, or even whether the latter is bad news for teenagers. "We don't know that yet – we are starting to rescan all of the participants at age 20, so we'll have a better sense of whether these changes persist or start to diminish with time," Gotlib said.

"In older adults, these brain changes are often associated with reduced cognitive functioning. It's not clear yet what they mean in adolescents. But this [demonstrates] that difficulties in mental health during the pandemic are accompanied by what seem to be stress-related changes in brain structure."

Farmers 'earn less than a penny profit' for loaf or block of cheese

Helena Horton
Environment reporter

UK farmers are receiving negligible profits for many items as food prices rise and supermarkets boast record takings.

An average block of cheese or loaf of bread produces less than a penny for farmers, and fruit producers do not fare much better, making only 3p from each kilo of apples.



▲ *Fruit farmers make only 3p profit for a kilo of apples, the report says*

The food charity Sustain analysed five everyday foodstuffs – apples, cheese, beefburgers, carrots and bread. It argues that because the margins are so tiny, farmers cannot invest in changing to more environmentally sustainable systems.

The report, published today, finds that a cereal farmer spends 9.03p to produce a loaf of bread, yet despite a selling price of £1.14 makes only 0.09p in profit. For a loaf sold in an independent bakery the farmer makes just 0.5p profit.

It finds that for a packet of four beefburgers sold in a supermarket, the processor makes 10 times as much profit as the beef farmer, who makes less than a penny per packet. For a 480g pack of mild cheddar costing £2.50 in a supermarket, the dairy farmer's costs are £1.48, and they make less than a penny in profit.

To fix the low payments for farmers, Sustain is calling for ministers to force supermarkets to publish more information about their supply chains, and for the government to put in place regional structural funds to invest in more local processing that could shorten supply chains. It is also calling for legally binding supply chain codes of practice, which would force supermarkets to give farmers a fair deal.

The British Retail Consortium, which represents supermarkets, has been contacted for comment.

NHS unions in discussions to stage coordinated Christmas strike

Continued *from page 1*

not expected to announce its plans until next week.

Health unions have an obligation to maintain "life-preserving care", but officials said ambulance service staffing levels in particular were already below a level normally regarded as a minimum for patient safety. Rachel Harrison, national officer at the GMB, said: "Vacancies in ambulance trusts across England and Wales are high and demand is through the roof - the headcount is far below what would typically be mandated as a safe staffing level for industrial action.

"This means, perversely, we would have to encourage members to work more during industrial action to meet what we believe to be safe staffing levels."

One senior NHS official said disruption to heavily overstretched NHS ambulance services would make it impossible to reach patients within current response times. The source said the ambulance worker would present "the biggest challenge. That's the one we're most concerned about. That's mainly because of how much pressure they are under and how they could reasonably be expected to maintain a high level service with so many paramedics off.

"They can contingency plan, of course, and there's a chance the army could come in to support. But it's not like other services where, to an extent, you can ration services, for example by not doing elective work to put more staff into emergency care [in hospitals]."

Dr Adrian Boyle, president of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine, told BBC Radio 4's Today programme it was estimated that more than 200 people who died last week in England were affected by urgent and emergency care issues.

Figures released yesterday showed that one in three patients arriving at hospitals in England by ambulance last week waited at least 30 minutes to be handed over to A&E teams.

The figure is higher than at any point in the past five winters and up 5% on the previous week. More than 11,000 patients - 15% of the total - waited more than an hour.

Prof Sir Stephen Powis, NHS England's national medical director, said the service was facing the "most challenging winter yet". He said: "These new figures show the NHS is facing a perfect storm, with winter virus cases rapidly increasing alongside ongoing pressures in emergency care and hugely constrained bed capacity."

Britain is facing rolling strikes across public services before Christmas, including by rail workers, security guards handling cash and driving examiners.

The PCS, representing civil servants including Border Force officers and Passport Office staff, has backed strike action but is yet to confirm dates. The Fire Brigades Union is also planning to ballot its members after rejecting a 5% pay rise.

GMB, Unite and Unison members voted in favour of a strike in ambulance trusts across England and Wales this week, rejecting the offer of a 4% rise, described as another "massive real-terms pay cut".

RCN members plan to strike on 15 and 20 December and on unspecified dates in January as they seek a 5% above-inflation pay rise, described as "not affordable" by the health secretary, Steve Barclay. Nurses will strike at 53 NHS organisations in England, including major hospitals, along with 12 of the 13 health boards and other NHS bodies in Wales and all 11 NHS bodies in Northern Ireland.

Rachel Power, chief executive of the Patients Association, urged the government to go back to the negotiating table. She said: "We believe patients should have access to safe and effective care when they need it.

"But we do respect the right of any employee to consider industrial action and know for many employees, going on strike is very much the last option when all other ways of resolving differences have broken down. We also know how hard the last few years have been on people working in the health and social care system. Many of them are demoralised and many are leaving the service."

She added: "At a time when hospitals are struggling to cope, the cancellation of operations and appointments because of industrial action will increase pressures across NHS services, which are already stretched to breaking point.

"In fact, industrial action by any group of employees can put the normal running of patient services at risk, which is why we'd like the government to talk to the unions to find a solution."

> ***'The ambulance worker strike would present the biggest challenge. That's the one we're most concerned about'***
>
> **Senior NHS official**



Is a general strike likely?

Millions of workers could unite to stage joint action

What is a general strike?
The Trades Union Congress, which represents most UK unions, was once able to coordinate a strike among a few powerful unions without the need for ballots. There was the potential for millions of workers to simply walk off the job in support of action determined in the TUC headquarters to confront the government of the day.

What happened in 1926?
A general strike, the only one to take place in Britain, was called on 3 May 1926. It lasted nine days. About 1.5 million workers were involved, as many as are expected to go on strike this month.

After the ravages of the first world war, and lost decades of investment, much of industrial landscape in terms of machinery and technology was in poor condition. Employers reacted by driving down wages. Back then, there were 17 million private sector workers and only 1.5 million in the public sector, compared with 27 million and 5.7 million respectively today. The TUC chose to limit participation in the strike to railway and transport workers, printers and dock workers as well as those in the iron and steel industry, representing other industries that were also in distress.

Can unions call a general strike?
Not any more. Trade union laws introduced after the general strike and tightened in the 1980s restrict disputes to successful ballots at individual workplaces.

A union can coordinate industrial action by workers, as the University College Union has done, holding strikes on particular days at all colleges that have voted for strikes, but strikers are banned from attending each others' protests, known as secondary picketing.

What does the law say?
The Trade Union & Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 sets out the legal requirements before industrial action can take place in England, Scotland and Wales. There is separate legislation in Northern Ireland.

In England, Scotland and Wales, industrial action ballots must attract at least a 50% turnout and the majority must vote yes for action to be lawful. So, if 100 workers are eligible to vote, and only 49 turn out for the vote, workers cannot take industrial action, even if all 49 vote in favour.

These rules were amended in 2016 by David Cameron's administration to cover turnouts in public services in England and Scotland. It means public sector workers in these countries whose role involves the delivery of "important public services" must meet an additional 40% support threshold among all workers eligible to vote, as well as the 50% turnout threshold, for action to be lawful.

So if 100 important public services workers are eligible to

▼ *Striking Royal Mail workers at Bexhill-on-Sea post office cheer as passing motorists hoot in support*
PHOTOGRAPH: JON SANTA CRUZ



'Pushed beyond limits'

Joshua, a paramedic, shares why he is striking
"I genuinely believe most of the public have no idea how bad the situation is. We're being pushed beyond limits, constantly [having] dispatchers pleading for crews to come through. A massive part of the issue is ambulances sat at hospitals for hours on end.

"Ambulance crews are seeing [patients die] day in and day out. I think to myself, god, please don't let any of my family need an ambulance. It's terrifying.

"The cost of living is astronomical … [We've had] real-terms pay cuts year after year. I've gone from living a relatively comfortable life to just counting every penny that I have.

"I've seen co-workers crying, single parents who can't afford to do this job any more. So many people are leaving because we're treated [badly] and not paid anywhere near enough.

"Staff going off sick with burnout, stress and suicidal thoughts is endemic across the ambulance service."
Interview by Clea Skopeliti

vote, at least 50 must fill in a ballot form, and at least 40 of them must vote in favour.

Records of members must be up to date, and economic unit of business activity defined, which helps employers with subsidiaries, limiting the scope of any action. Agency workers can be legally employed as strike breakers, as happened recently when Harrods hired an independent security firm to cover a strike by 90 of its own security staff who the GMB union said had suffered a pay cut.

Are strikes planned in the private sector?

Businesses that were previously state-owned, such as BT and Royal Mail, have faced months of industrial strife. This week, in a bid to end a protracted and bitter dispute that involved BT's first national strike action in 35 years, the telecoms group awarded 71,000 staff on £50,000 or less a £1,500 pay rise in addition to a £1,500 pay rise in April.

Three days of strike action scheduled for this week involving more than 2,000 bus drivers employed by Metroline were called off on Tuesday after last-minute talks produced an improved pay offer, the union said. **Phillip Inman**

Calendar From Royal Mail to the NHS, action planned for December

Almost daily strike action across sectors ranging from transport to the NHS is set to take place in the lead-up to, and over, Christmas:

Yesterday, 1 December
Royal Mail workers, university lecturers and staff at sixth-form colleges have been staging pickets sparked by pay disputes in one of the biggest walkouts of the current wave of industrial action.

The mail members of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) will also carry out single days of action up and until Christmas Eve.

Members of the University and College Union (UCU) at 150 universities have been on strike, following up a 48-hour strike last week with a 24-hour stoppage.

Monday, 5 December
More than 1,000 security workers who deliver cash and coins to some of the UK's biggest banks and supermarkets are to take part in a 48-hour strike. The GMB union has been asking G4S for a 15% pay rise.

Wednesday, 7 December
Teachers from the Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association and NASUWT unions will begin the first of two days of strikes in a dispute over pay.

Thursday, 8 December
Bus drivers on Metroline, which covers routes in north and west London, could go ahead with strike action if they reject an improved pay offer from the company.

Three days of strike action scheduled for this week, involving more than 2,000 bus drivers from Unite, were called off on 30 November after last-minute talks produced the offer.

Teachers at Scottish secondary schools hold their second day of strikes.

Friday, 9 December
Bus workers for Abellio, whose services are largely focused in the south and west of London, are to stage their latest strike after three days of action in late November.

Also on strike: Unite bus drivers at Metroline, depending on whether an improved pay offer is accepted; and postal worker members of the CWU.

Saturday, 10 December
Abellio Bus workers in the south and west of London will be on strike again.

Sunday, 11 December
Postal worker members of CWU.

Monday, 12 December
Strike by Unison members will take place in Northern Ireland across ambulance and other NHS services.

Tuesday, 13 December
Thousands of members of the RMT union working for Network Rail and 14 train operating companies are to stage the first day of strikes, causing disruption across six consecutive days. The strike includes signalling staff, whose absence is likely to mean a minority of services will run on main lines. Workers from another transport union, the TSSA, will also take strike action due to their continuing dispute over pay, job security and conditions. Their strikes on this day will affect Avanti West Coast lines.

The first of a number of strikes by staff at the government's Rural Payment Agency (RPA) will also take place.

Also in the civil service, workers including driving examiners and call centre staff will begin rolling regional walkouts at the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, starting on this date in Scotland and Northern Ireland.



▲ *Striking Abellio bus drivers at the picket line in south London yesterday. They are also set to strike next Friday* PHOTOGRAPH: GUY SMALLMAN/GETTY IMAGES

Wednesday, 14 December
Another day of multiple strikes, including: RMT members working for Network Rail and 14 train operating companies; TSSA members on Avanti West Coast lines; postal worker members of the CWU and staff at the RPA.

Thursday, 15 December
The first in a series of stoppages by up to 100,000 nurses, which will affect 53 NHS organisations in England, will take place. Unite bus drivers at Metroline may also take action, depending on whether an improved pay offer is accepted; so might postal worker members of the CWU.

Friday, 16 December
Security staff working for Eurostar, who are members of the RMT, will begin the first of four days of walkouts in a pay dispute, although this is not likely to stop trains. Action is also expected by RMT members working for Network Rail and 14 train operating companies; Unite bus drivers at Metroline, depending on whether an improved pay offer is accepted; Abellio Bus workers in the south and west of London; TSSA members on Avanti West Coast lines and staff at RPA.

Saturday, 17 December
Strike action will be taken by members of the TSSA working for c2c, which serves more than two dozen stations between east London and south Essex; RMT staff at Network Rail and 14 train operating companies; Abellio Bus workers in the south and west of London; and TSSA members on Avanti West Coast lines will also be taking action.

Sunday, 18 December
Members of the RMT will start an overtime ban across the railways, which will run until 2 January, meaning RMT be taking industrial action for four weeks. Eurostar security staff will also be on strike.

Tuesday, 20 December
Strike action by nurses from the Royal College of Nursing. Action by ambulance and other health staff is also possible amid talks by unions over a coordinated effort.

Thursday, 22 December
Cleaners in the RMT union will begin the first of a number of days of strikes rail firms including Avanti, although services are unlikely to halt. Eurostar security staff will also be on strike.

Friday, 23 December
Eurostar security staff, cleaners for a number of rail companies and postal worker members of the CWU are all due to take action.

Saturday, 24 December
Postal worker members of the CWU are due on strike.

Saturday, 31 December
RMT members working as cleaners for a number of rail companies are due to take action.
Ben Quinn

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No inquiries into 40 possible breaches of ministerial code

Jessica Elgot
Deputy political editor

Forty potential breaches of the ministerial code have never been referred for investigation by the ethics adviser over the past five years, according to new data.

Rishi Sunak has launched a hunt for a new adviser on ministerial interests but several candidates have turned down the role. Sunak is not offering any enhanced powers, which means advisers would not be able to launch their own investigations.

The ethics adviser would be likely to face calls to renew or open at least two complex investigations – including concluding one into alleged Islamophobic comments made by the then-chief whip Mark Spencer to the MP Nusrat Ghani.

There is likely also to be pressure to open a new investigation into the home secretary, Suella Braverman, who was sacked from the role for a potential security breach by Liz Truss before being reappointed by Sunak.

The pressure group Transparency International is among those calling for the role to have greater powers. In analysis of media reports, it found 40 potential breaches of the ministerial code have not been investigated over the past five years. Those included:

- Meetings by Nadhim Zahawi and Kwasi Kwarteng with Libya's Fathi Bashagha, organised by the lobbyist Mark Fullbrook, who became Truss's chief of staff.
- Michael Gove accepting £120,000 in donations from property developers while housing secretary.
- Anne-Marie Trevelyan holding multiple meetings with a Chinese state-owned nuclear power company with no record of what was discussed.

The ministers have claimed that donations and meetings were recorded accurately, but Transparency International said each should be investigated where a perceived conflict of interest may arise.

It has called for appointments to the role to be made with a competitive process and for the position to be defined in law rather than being at the prime minister's whim. A government spokesperson said it was committed to appointing an independent ethics adviser and the process was ongoing.

Schools see rise in pupils who cannot afford to eat – survey

Sally Weale
Education correspondent

More than half of school leaders in England are noticing more pupils who cannot afford a lunch yet are not eligible for free school meals, according to a survey.

Research by the Sutton Trust, an educational charity, found signs that the cost of living crisis was increasingly affecting young people's education, with a growing number of pupils arriving at school tired, cold and hungry.

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of 6,200 state school teachers polled said they had noticed an increase in the number of pupils who were tired or unable to concentrate, while 54% said more children were coming to school without adequate clothing, such as a warm winter coat.

More than two-thirds (67%) have students with behavioural issues, 38% said a growing number of children were coming to school hungry, and 17% reported a rise in families asking to be referred to food banks.

Despite the cost of living crisis, the government resisted pressure to widen access to free school meals (FSM) in the November budget. According to the Sutton Trust, 52% of senior leaders recorded an increase in the number of non-FSM children unable to afford lunch during the autumn term, rising to 59% of leaders in the most deprived schools.

In those schools, almost three-quarters of teachers said financial pressures were affecting the ability of at least a third of their class to succeed in school, with pupils in the north-west, Yorkshire and the north-east most likely to fall into that category.

A Department for Education spokesperson said: "Over a third of pupils in England currently receive free school meals in education settings and we are investing up to £24m in our national school breakfast programme, which provides free breakfasts in disadvantaged areas."



74%
The proportion of staff who have seen an increase in pupils who are tired or unable to concentrate

'Catastrophic' 20% slump in trainee teachers

Richard Adams
Education editor

The number of graduates training to be teachers in England has slumped to "catastrophic" levels, with the government missing its own recruitment targets by more than 80% in key subjects such as physics.

The Department for Education's initial teacher training figures show that just under 29,000 graduates have signed up this year, a 20% fall compared with 36,000 last year, and far below the 40,000 trainees registered during the pandemic in 2020-21.

But the figures are far worse for secondary school recruitment, where they are at just 59% of the DfE's annual target, well below the 79% reached last year. It means the government has missed its own targets in nine of the past 10 years.

Further, thirteen out of 17 secondary subject areas missed their targets, with the biggest gaps in science and technology. Just 444 physics teachers signed up for training, equating to one for every eight state secondary schools in England.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said the figures were "nothing short of catastrophic" because of acute shortages. He attributed the fall to the "long-term erosion of teacher pay" and "the government's underfunding of schools, which has driven up workload and made the profession less attractive".

A DfE spokesperson said the department was taking action of teacher recruitment: "For teacher trainees in 2023, bursaries worth up to £27,000 and scholarships worth up to £29,000 to in key subjects such as chemistry, computing, mathematics, and physics are available. We also remain committed to raising the starting salary for teachers to £30,000 next year."

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◀ Ngozi Fulani told Good Morning Britain the encounter at Buckingham Palace felt like an interrogation
PHOTOGRAPH: KEN MCKAY/ITV/REX

Charity boss felt palace aide wanted her 'to denounce citizenship'

Emily Dugan
Caroline Davies
Jamie Grierson

A black British charity leader has said she felt she was being forced to denounce her citizenship when she was "interrogated" by the late queen's lady-in-waiting about where she "really came from".

Ngozi Fulani, who founded the domestic abuse charity Sistah Space, was questioned repeatedly about her background by the royal aide Susan Hussey at a Buckingham Palace reception.

Comparing the incident to the Windrush scandal, Fulani told BBC Radio 4's Today programme that the encounter felt "like an interrogation" and "abuse". She also said that despite Buckingham Palace saying it had "reached out" to her and was inviting her to "discuss all elements of her experience", she had not heard from royal officials.

Lady Hussey, 83, apologised and resigned from her honorary position as a lady of the royal household after the incident on Tuesday at a violence against women and girls reception hosted by Camilla, the queen consort.

When asked to describe the conversation, Fulani said: "Like an interrogation. I guess the only way I can explain it, she's determined: 'Where are you from? Where are your people from?'"

Fulani said that at first she wondered if Hussey had not been able to hear her answer when she continued to ask the same question.

"But it dawned on me this was nothing to do with her capacity to understand, but this is her trying to make me really denounce my British citizenship."

She added: "This is like a Windrush thing to me. You can't make me unwelcome in my own space."

Fulani said it was ageist to suggest that the comments could be attributed to Hussey's age. "I've heard so many suggestions it's about her age and stuff like that and I think that's a kind of a disrespect about ageism," she said. "Are we saying that because of your age you can't be racist or you can't be inappropriate?"

She added: "If you invite people to an event against domestic abuse, and there are people there from different demographics, I don't see the relevance of whether I'm British or not British. You're trying to make me unwelcome in my own space."

Fulani later told ITV's Good Morning Britain (GMB) programme that no one from the palace had approached her over the incident. "People keep saying the palace has reached out to me. Nobody has reached out to me," she said.

Asked whether the palace had perhaps reached out via her charity, Sistah Space, Fulani said: "No. I don't know where this has come from, but I'm telling you categorically, we have not heard from the palace."

She said if she did receive an invitation from the Prince of Wales to attend the palace and discuss her experience, she would accept it, telling GMB: "See, what we're about is positive results, so absolutely, I think a discussion should be held. We're very happy to have that discussion, because we just want to bring it back to 16 days of activism. This is about violence against women and girls, and although I didn't experience physical violence, what I feel I experienced was a form of abuse."

'I've heard this is about her age but this is a kind of disrespect about ageism'

Ngozi Fulani
Charity leader

Sources have indicated that the palace has tried to reach out through one of the organisations through which Fulani is aligned. A spokesperson for the Prince of Wales, who is Hussey's godson, said the comments were unacceptable and that "racism has no place in our society".

Asked how she felt about Hussey's resignation, Fulani said: "I want the focus to remain where it should be, which is on the women and girls who are affected by domestic abuse. Having said that, she's influenced by Buckingham Palace, and it's their decision and her decision to make, one that I had no part in."

Asked if she would have preferred to accept Hussey's apology instead of seeing her resign, Fulani said: "I would have preferred it did not happen. I would have preferred that I could go to a space where I'm invited and be treated as every other guest was treated. I would prefer that we kept the focus on the abuse against women and girls."

Meanwhile, Nazir Afzal, the chancellor of the University of Manchester, has revealed he was questioned about his heritage by Hussey at the same event. The former chief prosecutor for the Crown Prosecution Service said on Twitter: "I was at the Buckingham Palace reception at which Lady Hussey questioned the heritage of a brilliant DV expert Ngozi Fulani. She only asked me my heritage once & seemed to accept my answer - Manchester currently! Racism is never far away tho."



What was so offensive

Step-by-step analysis of questions put to Fulani

Aamna Mohdin

The racism scandal that has enveloped the palace resulted in the resignation of Lady Susan Hussey after she made "unacceptable and deeply regrettable comments" to a black charity boss during a Buckingham Palace reception.

Ngozi Fulani, founder of the charity Sistah Space, said Hussey left her feeling violated after she allegedly moved a hair lock away from her name badge then repeatedly questioned her about where she "really came from".

The palace described the remarks as "unacceptable and deeply regrettable". A spokesperson for Prince William said "racism has no place in our society".

Fulani described the encounter as abusive and an attempt by Hussey to make her denounce her British citizenship.

The encounter on Tuesday, at a reception on gender-based violence, was witnessed by Mandu Reid, leader of the Women's Equality party, and another charity representative. Fulani posted about the interaction on her social media. Here is a breakdown of the exchange - and an explanation of exactly why it has led to accusations of racism.

'She moved my hair to see my name badge'

Fulani alleged that Hussey took a lock of hair and moved it out of the way to see the name on her badge. Anti-racist campaigners have long argued that touching someone's hair without their permission, particularly a black person's hair, is offensive and discriminatory as it feeds into the "othering" of black people.

The academic and writer Emma Dabiri explained why in her first book Don't Touch My Hair: "Generally, black people know our hair takes time and effort to do so



▲ *Ngozi Fulani (centre left, wearing brown) at the palace reception with Camilla, the queen consort (centre)* PHOTOGRAPH: KIN CHEUNG/AFP/GETTY

they don't usually try and put their grubby hands up in it.

"I think there is also more of an awareness of boundaries and personal space, as well as the enduring, if these days mostly implicit, awareness that our hair has a spiritual significance."

Fulani felt the same. She told ITV's Good Morning Britain: "She just made a beeline for me, and she took my locks and moved it out of the way so that she could see my name badge. That's a no-no. I wouldn't put my hands in someone's hair, and culturally it's not appropriate."

'No, what part of Africa are you from?'

Fulani claimed after she was repeatedly asked about her origins, Hussey then asked her what part of the African continent she was from. It is offensive and ignorant to assume that because someone is black, they have come from the African continent.

'Well, you must know where you're from'

In response to being asked which African country she was from, Fulani responded that she didn't know as "they didn't leave any records". She was pointing to the slave trade, in which millions of Africans were forcibly transported to the Americas and the Caribbean. It was the largest forced migration in human history. Many descendants of enslaved people are unaware of their ancestors' origins as detailed records of people's names and origins were not kept.

'No, but what nationality are you?'

When Fulani said she was from the UK, she alleged Hussey then asked her to clarify what her nationality was. A nationality is the sovereign country that a person belongs to. The implication is that Fulani is not a British national and because of her appearance and skin colour that she must be a national of another country.

'No, but where do you really come from, where do your people come from?'

Asking someone where they are from can be a harmless question, but it depends on the context: how it is asked, to whom, and the response given. In this case, Fulani alleged she was asked where she was "really from" and where "your people" come from.

This line of questioning again suggests that because of a person's skin colour or appearance, they cannot genuinely be from the UK. It can make someone feel as if they don't belong or have a right to be in the country.

These feelings can be compounded when asking someone about their "people" when they are British and identify as such. When later interviewed, Fulani echoed this when she said she felt the questions were "trying to make me unwelcome in my own space".

It is also particularly racially insensitive to ask where someone is from once they've already answered the question.



Lady Susan Hussey: 'unacceptable comments'

'Oh, I can see I am going to have a challenge getting you to say where you're from. When did you first come here?'

The refusal to accept the answer given to this at-times fraught questioning has led to allegations of racism.

Fulani also alleged she was asked when she first came to Britain, which many feel is a galling question to be asked when you are from the country in question.

Harry and Meghan Trailer for Netflix series released

Caroline Davies

An emotionally charged trailer of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex's forthcoming Netflix documentary series has been released, as Buckingham Palace reels from a racism incident and during a key visit to the US by the Prince and Princess of Wales.

In the 1 min 12 sec "teaser", Harry and Meghan share previously unseen intimate photographs, some showing the duchess apparently crying, with one scene showing Harry with his head tilted back as his wife appears to wipe away her tears with both hands.

As an unseen interviewer asks: "Why did you want to make this documentary?" a montage of black and white photographs flashes up. One shows Meghan curled up on a chair, head in hands on the phone and seemingly distressed. Harry says: "No one sees what is happening behind closed doors."

The trailer then cuts to a photograph of a stern-looking Kate, with William sitting beside her, and Meghan behind, taken at the Commonwealth Day service before the Sussexes left the UK.



▲ *The series will be a 'never-before-seen' look at the couple, Netflix says*

Further photos show Meghan sombre in a black hat, taken at the funeral of Queen Elizabeth, and another of a bank of press photographers, as Harry continues: "I had to do everything I could to protect my family." A picture shows Meghan seated in a car seemingly wiping away tears.

Meghan tells the interviewer: "When the stakes were this high, doesn't it make more sense to hear our story from us?"

Other, happier, personal photographs show Harry playing guitar for his wife, the couple hiking, wading in a stream with their dogs, a pregnant Meghan in silhouette, dancing at their wedding, and sharing a kiss in their kitchen.

In a statement, Netflix described "Harry & Meghan" as a "never-before-seen look at one of the most discussed couples in history".

The timing of the trailer is not the best for Buckingham Palace, which is still dealing with the aftermath of the resignation of Lady Susan Hussey, one of the late Queen's ladies-in-waiting, after she questioned the charity founder Ngozi Fulani about where she was "really from" at a palace reception. The palace and William, her godson, have described the comments as "deeply regrettable" and "unacceptable".

Kensington Palace will also undoubtedly be concerned that the trailer will switch the focus to the Sussexes and away from William and Kate as they undertake the second day of engagements in Boston promoting the prince's Earthshot environmental prize.

Netflix said in a statement: "In an unprecedented and in-depth documentary series, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex share the other side of their high-profile love story.

"Across six episodes, the series explores the clandestine days of their early courtship and the challenges that led to them feeling forced to step back from their full-time roles in the institution.

"With commentary from friends and family, most of whom have never spoken publicly before about what they witnessed, and historians who discuss the state of the British Commonwealth today and the royal family's relationship with the press, the series does more than illuminate one couple's love story, it paints a picture of our world and how we treat each other."



▲ *Across six episodes the series explores the couple's early courtship and the events that prompted them to leave the UK* PHOTOGRAPH: PRINCE HARRY AND MEGHAN/AP

Inside World
'I deny that I have violated my oath'
Crisis-hit Ramaphosa facing impeachment
Page 31 →





National
Water industry



Ofwat fails to act as customers pay a fifth of water bill towards profits and £54bn of debt

Sandra Laville
Anna Leach

Ofwat is refusing to limit the soaring debts run up by water companies as research reveals the firms have outstanding borrowing of almost £54bn accrued since privatisation.

Customers are paying on average £80, or 20% of their water bill, towards servicing debt and rewarding shareholders, according to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

The scale of debt, known as gearing, taken on by the nine main water and sewerage companies in England is raising concerns about their financial stability as interest rates rise.

The level of net debt held by water companies is revealed as Guardian data shows the main water and sewerage firms in England have paid dividends to shareholders of £65.9bn up to 2022.

They have been running ratios of debt to capital value from 60% to more than 80%, according to Ofwat data. The regulator has considered inserting conditions into water company licences to limit the debt a water company can take on, to protect the public from the impact of financial collapse because of high levels of borrowing. However, Ofwat has so far rejected the idea.

The Guardian revealed this week that more than 70% of all water companies in England are owned by international investment funds, private equity, banks, the super-rich, and in some cases businesses registered in tax havens.

When the Conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher sold off the



A pleasant spot by a reservoir - but consumers rather than shareholders provide water firms' investment cash
PHOTOGRAPH: DANNY LAWSON/PA WIRE

water industry in 1989, the government wrote off all debts amounting to £5bn and granted the water companies a further £1.5bn of public money, known as a "green dowry". As of this year, net debt of the main water and sewerage companies was £53.9bn.

David Hall, visiting professor at the Public Services International Research Unit at Greenwich University, who has updated groundbreaking research by Karol Yearwood, said the evidence suggested the high level of gearing was being taken on in order for the companies to pay dividends, rather than to fund investment.

"It is very different from a more traditional company structure, where the operating expenditure comes out of the flows of revenue from customers but the investment in plant, machinery etc is paid for by investing capital from shareholders and creditors. Dividends are then paid out of the company's profit, as a return on their capital investment.

"With the water companies, since day one there has been hardly any shareholder capital put into the companies. Customers pay for everything, and the companies are borrowing to pay the dividends often to themselves."

With rising interest rates and a cost of living crisis, the scale of debt is raising alarm about the financial fragility of some water companies. On one key financial measure, interest coverage ratio (ICR), five companies - Anglian, Northumbrian, Severn Trent, Thames and Southern - have ICRs below the 1.6 threshold that indicates a strong credit rating, according to Ofwat's most recent financial resilience report.

Some companies have been forced to ask shareholders to urgently inject money to bolster their financial resilience. Anglian Water was given an injection of cash by investors to reduce its net debt, in order to protect its credit rating and reduce its debt gearing from 82% to 64.8%.

Thames Water received a similar cash injection of £1.5bn to improve its financial resilience.

Ofwat said this summer: "We have become increasingly concerned about the impact of the financing decisions made by some companies on their long-term financial position … and how this could affect service to customers. This is a particular issue where companies need to finance a turnaround plan or to improve performance."

Ofwat can put water companies into special administration to protect services for the public. But Prof Robin Mason, of the University of Birmingham, said this had never happened, even in the most extreme of cases. Citing the example of Southern Water, he said in a paper for the regulator: "Underperformance by Southern Water has continued for a number of years.

"Southern Water's gearing, including derivative liabilities, has been very high; its credit rating has dropped to the lowest level consistent with [Moody's] investment grade; and it has recently received the largest fine for any water company and is subject to ongoing investigation by the Environment Agency.

"Nevertheless, the special administration procedures have not been triggered for Southern Water; and indeed, special administration arrangements have yet to be used in the UK water sector."

Ofwat says companies must do more to better protect customers from the consequences of weak levels of financial resilience. But in its clampdown on water company finances, which is out to consultation, the regulator has stopped short of putting a cap on the amount of debt each company can take on.

Ofwat said: "We are unequivocal that companies have a responsibility to maintain their financial resilience. Where that is not the case, we will not hesitate to intervene. Over the past 18 months we have overseen substantial equity committed to going into three companies, totalling over £3.5bn.

"We are introducing new requirements to raise the bar further on financial resilience across the sector and will continue to monitor financial resilience closely, taking action where necessary."

Critics say Ofwat is belatedly trying to curb the excesses of the water companies and question whether a regulator is able to control an industry now managed in the interests of offshore investors, not the public and the environment.

Dr Kate Bayliss, of the department of economics at Soas University of London, said: "I can't see that regulation is going to manage it in the interests of society and the environment when you have these very powerful interests making returns for their investors. The assumptions of the regulator are really quite limited compared to the financial sophistication of these investors."

Water companies defended their financial controls. Anglian Water said it had made a number of investments in order to improve infrastructure, reduce leakage and improve drinking water quality, made possible by private financing: "The fact that we can finance multimillion-pound schemes demonstrates our robust financial platform and the long-standing support we have from our owners."

Southern Water said: "We operate in a tightly regulated environment and our step up in investment - totalling £2bn between 2020 and 2025 - has been assessed and approved by Ofwat to ensure we deliver the performance our customers want and deserve, at an affordable price, and in a sustainable way."

Sarah Bentley, who took over as chief executive at Thames Water in September 2020, has spoken about her plan to invest billions in the network, with the shareholders "underwriting a turnaround plan, and urged the regulators "to encourage responsible long-term investment" by "more patient investors, such as pension funds".

> ***'Customers pay for everything, and the companies borrow to pay the dividends'***
>
> **David Hall**
> *Greenwich University*

The money drain
Who pays and who benefits

The untreated sewage that overflowed into rivers and on to beaches in England this summer came only a few months after the companies responsible paid £1bn to their shareholders, for the financial year to March 2022.

The amount of sewage leaving the system was unusual, but the money leaving the system is not - though dividends from England's big water and sewage companies are usually £2bn a year. In the 30 years since England's water was privatised by Margaret Thatcher, water companies have set up a system in which billions leave the network in an average year.

Where is the money going? England's nine big water and sewage companies had zero debt in 1989 when they were sold off to the private sector. Now they have £54bn. The number is even higher when you include the six smaller water-only companies.

It is normal for companies to take out debt to fund investment. But not here, researchers say. "Investments have been entirely financed from customer payments, almost every year," said Prof David Hall, an expert on England's water industry, in a 2021 analysis.

Hall argued the loans had been used for something else. "The companies have nevertheless borrowed large amounts of money, building up a large pile of debt and large annual bill for interest," he said. "This debt has not been taken on to finance investment, but to finance the payment of dividends."

About 20% of our water bills each year pay dividends and interest payments, the Competition and Markets Authority has found.

Water company debt has gone from zero in 1989 to £54bn in 2022. In the same period, £66bn was paid out in dividends. Again, including dividend payments from water-only companies would result in a higher figure.

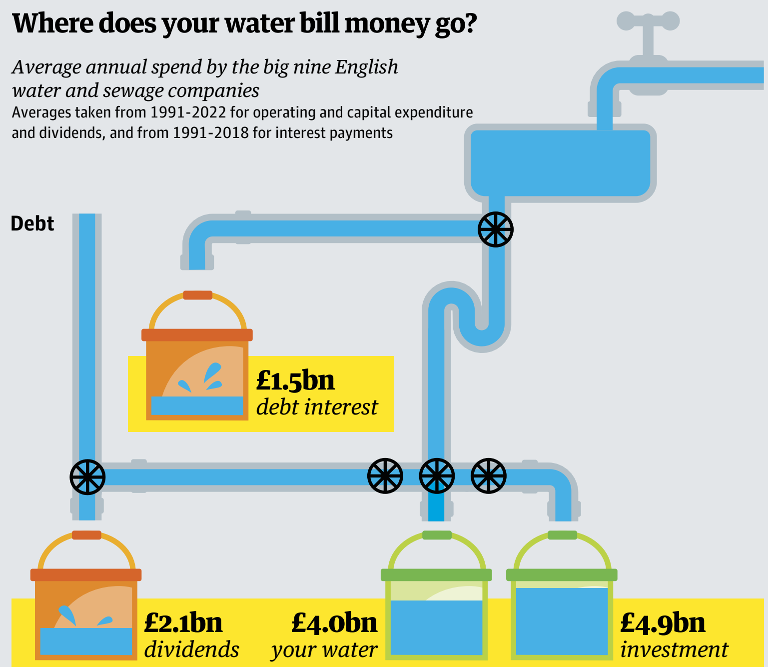
Water companies made several statements to the Guardian about their dividend policies and levels of debt. Several said dividends were important to shareholders and allowed by the regulatory system. Some highlighted that less was spent on dividends than investment. Companies also said they had spent significant sums on investment since privatisation.

Ofwat figures show the big nine have spent a total of £158bn on capital expenditure (investment) between 1991 and 2022. On debt levels, companies maintain they have responsibly raised debt and worked to ensure financial stability, with some taking action to reduce inter-company loans and overall debt.

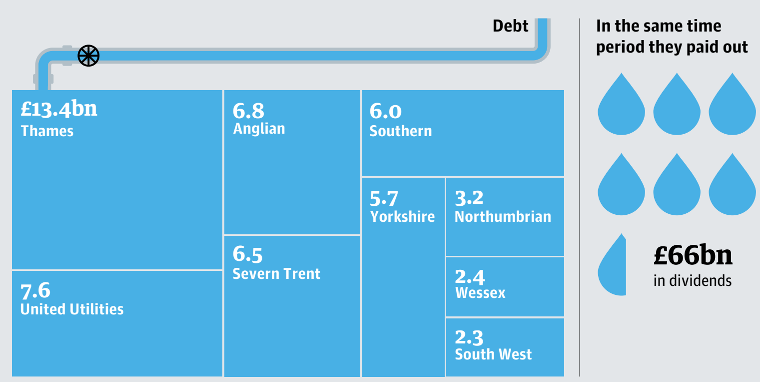
Anna Leach and Ellen Wishart

Where does your water bill money go?

Average annual spend by the big nine English water and sewage companies
Averages taken from 1991-2022 for operating and capital expenditure and dividends, and from 1991-2018 for interest payments



Net debt of nine main English water and sewage companies, March 2022



Source: Ofwat, Yearwood 2018, Hall 2022, company reports

Waves of wellbeing Swimmers celebrate clean seawater rating

Steven Morris

The air was cold and misty, the water chilly and muddy-looking, but nevertheless, as day broke, a couple of dozen members of the Dawnstalkers sea swim club strode down the slipway and joyfully plunged in to the Severn Estuary.

"That was great," said Grant Zehetmayr, a founder of the club that meets on Penarth seafront in south Wales come rain, sun or even snow, after his dip. "Dawnstalkers has changed my life. Knowing that every day there will be someone ready to brave the cold sea with you is really quite special. I love it."

Yesterday the Dawnstalkers were feeling particularly cheerful after - to the surprise of many - the bathing water quality at Penarth beach was officially rated "excellent" by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). After a year in which the quality of water off beaches around England and Wales has attracted ugly headlines, it was a bit of bright news, especially as the beach is just round the headland from Cardiff and easily accessible to hundreds of thousands of people.

Zehetmayr, 44, a company boss who has swum off Penarth almost every day since New Year's Eve 2020, conceded the water didn't appear inviting. "It's silty and some people still think it must be grim."

People raised concerns about the "nuclear mud" dumped off Cardiff and Penarth after being excavated as part of the Hinkley Point C project on the Somerset coast. "But I haven't been ill from swimming and I haven't come out glowing," he said. "This designation feels a bit like vindication."

The Welsh climate change minister, Julie James, herself a keen sea swimmer, said Wales wanted more groups to ask for their swimming spots to be officially designated as bathing water. "We want to be a world leader on this," she said. "We want to encourage everyone of all shapes, sizes and abilities to don their costumes and brave our waters. We are keen to make sure community groups know they can apply to have water designated and checked."

James Tennet, an events director who led Penarth's campaign for a designation, said: "Not many


Grant Zehetmayr swims every day

people used to swim here. The water is brown and doesn't look enticing but I wanted to find out if, actually, it was safe." He said getting it categorised as "excellent" was a bonus and would encourage more people to visit and jump in. "It's not so much about swimming. It's more about going into the water and talking and connecting and communing," he said.

It is not that the waters off Wales are perfect. NRW's information about Penarth beach highlights that there are sewage pumping stations with sea outfalls not far from where the Dawnstalkers meet. There are regularly Surfers Against Sewage warnings at Welsh beaches, even those with "excellent" designations.

Dawnstalker Dr Kat Rayson, a clinical psychologist, said a swim helped her mental health. "People are so friendly despite the ungodly hour and cold, and we know that those small everyday connections improve our mental health. When I do dip regularly, I feel a sense of euphoria. When I don't do it, I notice sadness creeping back in."

Jackie Rawlings, 76, said: "The exhilaration experienced from cold water swimming is impossible to describe. Having the support of people that you can talk to when things are tough, knowing you won't be judged, is priceless."





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'The exhilaration experienced from cold water swimming is impossible to describe'

Jackie Rawlings, 76

◀ *Members of the Dawnstalkers sea swimming club in Penarth, south Wales*
PHOTOGRAPH: DIMITRIS LEGAKIS/ THE GUARDIAN

Second homes in Gwynedd charged 150% extra council tax

Steven Morris

Second home owners in north Wales will have to pay a 150% council tax premium to tackle a spiralling homelessness crisis.

Councillors in Gwynedd agreed to raise the premium from its current 100% level - which already acts to double what permanent residents pay - and use the extra £3m it believes it will raise to provide more accommodation for people struggling to find a home.

During a heated meeting in Caernarfon, councillors described homeless families facing Christmas living in budget hotels and B&Bs in Gwynedd while wealthy outsiders enjoyed second homes in one of the most scenic parts of the UK.

One councillor said a member of her community had been on the waiting list for social housing for three years and had been forced to stay in the home where a relative died by suicide. Another said increasing the premium showed that Welsh communities were "not for sale".

Calling the decision "very significant", councillor Ioan Thomas, the cabinet member for finance on the Plaid Cymru-controlled council, said: "We believe that the basis of a sound economy is an economy where the people of Gwynedd have homes and contribute."

He said the homelessness figures were "very alarming". "We can't ignore a situation where it is estimated that 1,400 individuals will have presented themselves as homeless by the end of this year - double the number presenting before Covid-19. As a council we will be accommodating over 600 people in temporary accommodation this year, where the figure was around 200 before Covid."

Until now the focus of the debate across tourist hotspots in Wales has been second homes pushing up the cost of buying houses and flats beyond the reach of local people. Gwynedd is arguing this has the knock-on effect of rental prices soaring.

Craig ab Iago, the cabinet member for housing, said the idea was not to punish people: "We are in a housing crisis. We're talking about 200 people plus sleeping in B&Bs. There is a list of more than 3,000 people waiting over three years for a social house."



Volunteer officer used police ID in roadside rape attack, court told

Kevin Rawlinson

A woman allegedly raped at the roadside by an off-duty special constable said felt she had no choice but to stop and submit to his questions because he produced his warrant card.

She told Wolverhampton crown court she was left "numb and disgusted" and had not consented to sexual activity with Metropolitan police officer Paul Hoile who, she said, appeared to be drunk.

The 40-year-old volunteer officer from Essex denies three counts of rape relating to the same incident, claiming consensual activity took place "without fuss" after he and a friend approached the stranger at night in Shropshire in July.

Giving evidence yesterday, the complainant said Hoile told her not to drive and to book a taxi, leaving her feeling uncomfortable and anxious. After Hoile questioned her about her driving licence, she told jurors, he went "from just like asking questions to 'Oh, I caught you'."

Shielded from Hoile's view and the public gallery by a curtain, the woman, who cannot be identified, told the court: "I asked: 'Could I see your badge or your ID?' It was begrudging. He was fumbling to try and get it. I saw the card … the picture, and I saw the badge as well. I couldn't see his name. After a couple more questions I was like: 'Is that actually real?' On the second time … he still covered it" (his name).

She claimed Hoile was "aggressive, demanding" and "wasn't trying to hide it", while acting in an unprofessional manner.

> *'I had no choice. He is a police officer. I felt like I had to answer'*
>
> **Alleged rape victim**

Asked by Caroline Goodwin KC, prosecuting, why she had answered Hoile's questions, the woman said: "I had no choice. He is a police officer. I felt like I had to."

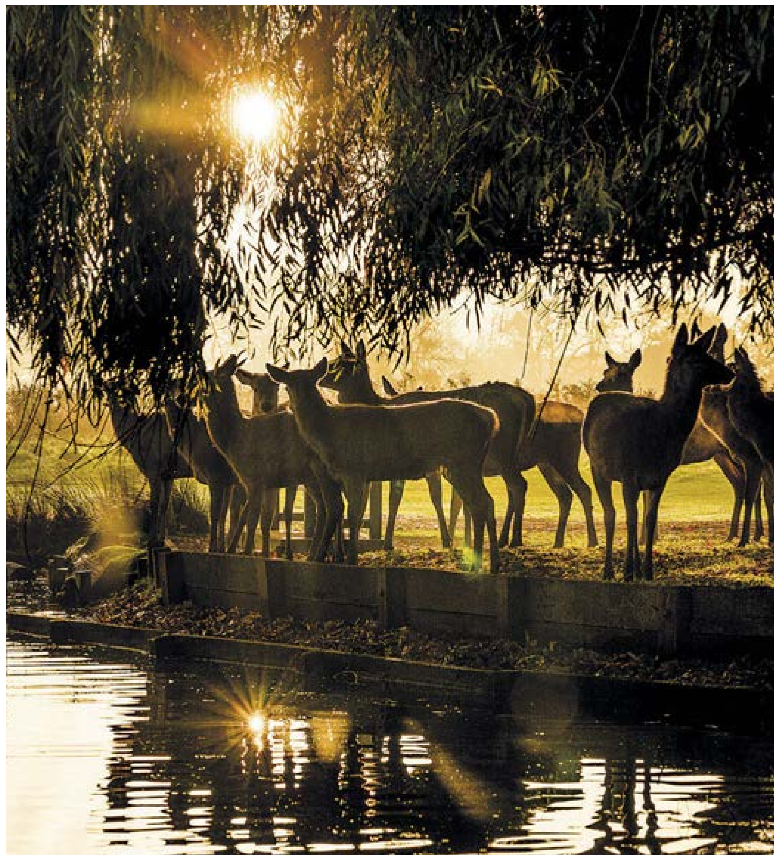
Insisting she had not given Hoile permission to carry out a sexual act, the woman said she had left the immediate area where her vehicle was because she "didn't want him to get any more aggressive than he was already".

"I didn't want him anywhere near me if I could help it," she said. "He was being aggressive and demanding. He was getting progressively more annoyed that I wasn't doing what I was being told" (going to the taxi).

She told the jury Hoile claimed to have saved her from an accident.

Asked to recall Hoile's manner before the alleged rapes, she said he had been "loud, annoyed, very unprofessional for a police officer … more like a drunk". She also said she had "no choice" when she performed oral sex at the roadside, had not said anything to encourage what happened, and had "humoured" her alleged attacker because she "didn't want a repeat of him getting angry".

Hoile denies misconduct in public office, three counts of oral and anal rape, and a charge of causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent. The trial continues.



PHOTOGRAPH: PETER MACDIARMID/LNP

Red and gold Red deer gather under a willow tree at first light next to Heron pond in Bushy Park, south-west London. Yesterday marked the beginning of meteorological winter.

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A Guardian video of the slap, which made headlines globally and gained more than 103m views on YouTube
PHOTOGRAPH: ROBYN BECK/AFP/GETTY

Video of Will Smith Oscar slap tops YouTube chart

Nadia Khomami
Arts and culture correspondent

A Guardian video of the moment Will Smith slapped Chris Rock on stage at the Oscars was the top trending video on YouTube in Britain this year.

The uncensored clip of the smack that reverberated around the world has racked up more than 103m views and 1.5m likes on the platform. It shows the moment the Hollywood star stormed the stage and slapped Rock after he made a joke about Smith's wife, Jada Pinkett Smith, and her shaved head - a result of her medical condition, alopecia - in March.

A shocked Rock then addresses the audience, saying: "Will Smith just smacked the shit out of me." Smith returns to his seat and shouts "Keep my wife's name out of your fucking mouth" as stunned members of the audience look on.

The video quickly went viral and made headlines across the globe as actors, celebrities and politicians took to social media to commend or condemn the incident.

Smith was subsequently banned from all Academy events or programmes for 10 years following his "unprecedented" behaviour. Two days on from the slap, he issued a public apology to Rock and the Oscars production team.

The video came in top of most trending lists for several countries around the world, and was second on the US list.

The categories in the top trending lists include the UK's top trending videos of 2022, the UK's top shorts of 2022, top creators of 2022 and top breakout creators of 2022.

The findings are based on a range of factors beyond just views that indicate how "trending" a video is by considering engagement and signals such as the number of shares and likes.

The second top trending video of the year was the Sidemen charity football match which was livestreamed on 24 September and has more than 27m views and more than 1.1m likes.

The three hour video was posted to the Sidemen YouTube channel, which was formed by a group of British YouTubers and fronted by the boxer, musician and social media personality KSI. It shows the full match between Sidemen FC and rivals YouTube Allstars as they took part in the 2022 Charity Match at The Valley, Charlton, and raised more than £1m. It included a performance by the electronic music duo Chase & Status.

Storm Eunice also made an appearance in this year's trending videos list with Big Jet TV's commentary on jets trying to land at Heathrow ranking at No 7, just above the nine hour-long livestreamed conclusion of the Johnny Depp and Amber Heard defamation trial, which has more than 24m views.

The American YouTuber MrBeast, real name Jimmy Donaldson, was named the top creator for 2022, followed by the Sidemen's channel.

Police lawyer 'watched World Cup on phone' during inquiry

Matthew Weaver

One of Scotland's most senior lawyers has been accused of showing contempt for an inquiry into the death of a man in police custody after he allegedly began watching a World Cup football match during the proceedings.

Gordon Jackson KC, who is representing three of the six police officers involved in the arrest of Sheku Bayoh at an inquiry into his death, is alleged to have started watching the game on his phone during an evidence session on Wednesday.

Bayoh's sister, Kadi Johnson, who was at the session, said: "Jackson, a lawyer for the three of the officers, PCs [Alan] Smith, [Kayleigh] Good and [Ashley] Tomlinson, had the audacity to sit and watching football during the evidence of an expert witness, Joanne Caffrey."

She added: "We were left so angry and found this behaviour not only to be disrespectful to us as a family, our lawyers, the chair and assessors but smacked of contempt for this inquiry. Never mind having respect for us as a family, but what about the police officers he represents?"

The sound of a football match caused a brief pause in proceedings on Wednesday at about 3.10pm during the first half of final Group D matches between Tunisia and France, and Australia and Denmark.



Sheku Bayoh's sisters Kadi Johnson (right) and Adama Jalloh

As evidence was being given by Caffrey, an expert witness on the use of force and police custody, a football crowd and commentary could be heard. Angela Grahame KC, the inquiry's senior counsel, apologised to Caffrey and glanced back to where Jackson was sitting.

Johnson said: "This is not the first time but one of many occasions that we have been dismayed at the manner in which some of the police lawyers have acted during the hearing. We have a direct eyeline and see what they do, but yesterday was the final straw for us, to find that a lawyer being paid thousands of pounds from public money to do his job was busy watching the World Cup."

Jackson was approached for comment.

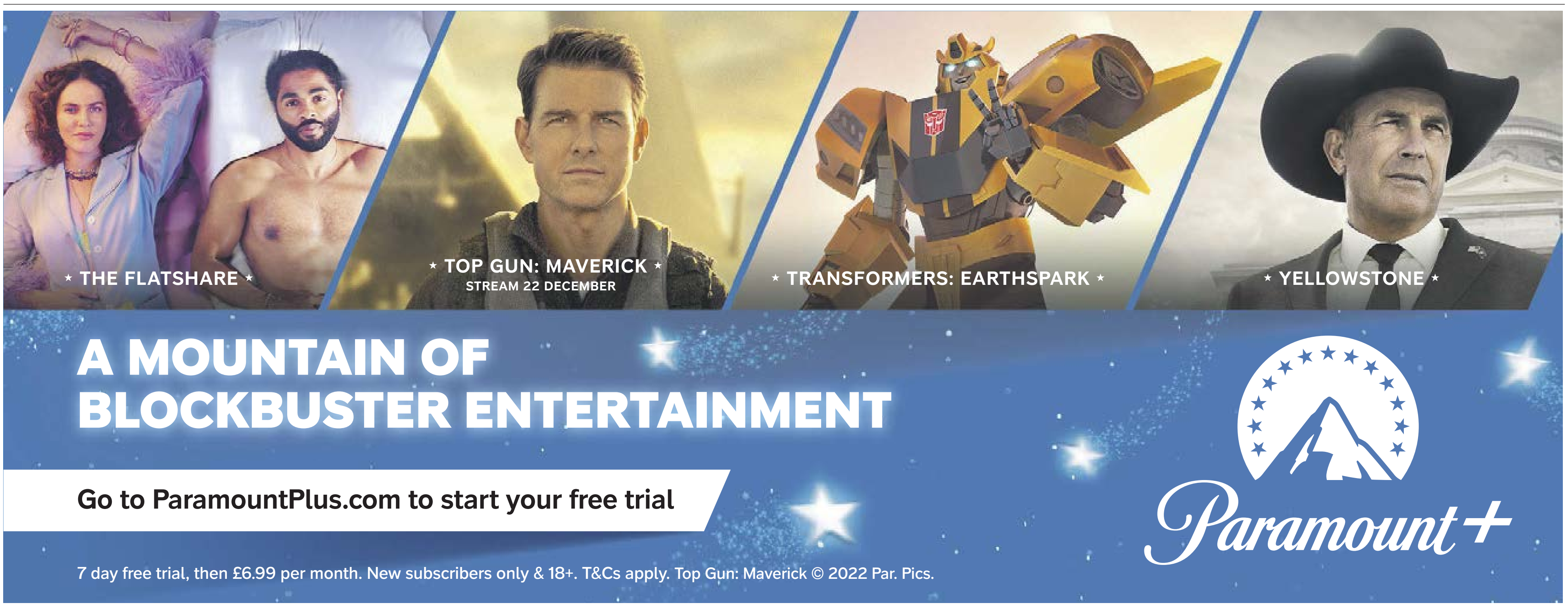
Claire Mitchell KC, a lawyer for Bayoh's family, raised the incident with the chair of the inquiry, Lord Bracadale. Yesterday, Bracadale said: "Ms Mitchell drew my attention to an incident earlier in the afternoon in which in the course of evidence a legal representative appeared to use a mobile phone for a purpose clearly unrelated to the proceedings of the inquiry.

"While that was a particularly egregious example, it was not the first occasion on which the sound of mobile phones has disturbed proceedings.

"I have no difficulty with mobile phones being used silently to make communications on matters relating to the inquiry, but inappropriate use within the hearing room is both distracting and disrespectful."

In 2020 Jackson, who defended the former first minister Alex Salmond at his sexual assault trial, referred himself to Scotland's legal watchdog after footage emerged that appears to show him identifying the complainants on a busy commuter train.

The Faculty of Advocates upheld a complaint of professional misconduct against Jackson over the incident. Salmond was acquitted.



Former rugby player Rob Burrow to make history by reading bedtime tale on CBeebies

Emily Dugan

The former rugby league player Rob Burrow is to become the first non-verbal person to read a bedtime story on the BBC.

Burrow, who used to play for Leeds Rhinos, will use an eye-controlled computer to read a story on International Day of People with Disabilities tomorrow. He lost the ability to speak without help in late 2020, a year after he was diagnosed with motor neurone disease (MND).

He will read Tilda Tries Again by Tom Percival on the CBeebies Bedtime Stories show at 6.50pm. The picture book is about a girl who finds ways to cope after her life is turned "topsy turvy".

Burrow, 40, was told he was unlikely to live more than two years when he was diagnosed with MND in 2019.

He made more than 400 appearances for Leeds Rhinos between 2001 and 2017 and was one of the most successful players in rugby league history, winning eight Super League championships.

Burrow's wife, Lindsey, and the younger of their three children, Maya, seven, and Jackson, three, accompanied him to the CBeebies recording studio and were given a behind-the-scenes tour.



▲ *Rob Burrow on CBeebies. The 40-year-old, who has motor neurone disease, uses a computer to talk after losing the ability to speak unaided*
PHOTOGRAPH: BBC

> *'I can no longer speak because [of] MND. But it doesn't stop me reading to my kids'*
>
> **Rob Burrow**
> *BBC interview*

"I loved doing the CBeebies bedtime story because it brought back so many memories of me reading stories to my own children," he said in a BBC interview. "Reading is so important and is accessible to everyone, no matter what disability you may have.

"I can no longer speak because MND has affected my speech muscles. But it doesn't stop me from reading to my three children. I hope you all enjoy listening to the story."

Burrow was awarded an MBE last year for services to rugby league and for his work raising awareness of MND since his diagnosis.

In a BBC video advertising the show, Burrow tells children: "Hello, I'm Rob, I can't use my voice in the way that maybe you can, which is why I use this computer to talk for me. I use my eyes to gaze or look at the words and it speaks for me. It's like magic."

The computer Burrow uses to speak has been designed to mimic his own Yorkshire accent. He said last year that the device had "completely changed my life" after being unable to express himself when he first lost his speech while Britain was in lockdown.

Burrow joins a host of celebrities who have read bedtime stories on the show, including Dolly Parton, David Tennant and Jessica Ennis-Hill.

Boris Johnson 'to stand again at next election'

PA Media

Boris Johnson will stand again at the next election, a source close to him has confirmed, setting up what could be a tough fight for the former prime minister to retain his job as an MP.

The source said Johnson had decided to contest the Uxbridge seat for a fourth time, despite polling suggesting he would lose it to Labour if the election were held now.

The decision, first reported by the Telegraph, could either result in a bruising exit from British politics or pave the way for a dramatic return to the frontline, from which he recently said he was on "temporary hiatus".

Johnson stood down as prime minister this year after revelations about his deputy chief whip Chris Pincher led to a mass walkout of ministers from his government.

Since then he has led a varied backbench career, giving highly paid speeches around the world, going on holiday to the Caribbean and carrying out occasional constituency visits.



Product, price and availability are correct at time of going to press but may change and are subject to availability. *T&Cs apply.

Council dismantles 'school street' play area at centre of row

Harriet Grant

An east London council sent construction workers in the middle of the night to dismantle a wooden structure protecting a "school street".

Children at Chisenhale primary in Bow arrived yesterday morning to find the structure and play space outside the school entrance had gone.

Last month children saw off workers in a standoff when a parent spotted men in hi-vis jackets arriving to dismantle the structure. It is part of a wider dispute over traffic reduction measures near the school after the mayor of Tower Hamlets, Lutfur Rahman, failed to renew school street legislation restricting cars at drop-off and pickup times.



▲ *The structures outside the school that created the play space area*

> *'One parent had a lorry reverse back as she was crossing with her five-year-old'*
>
> **Rupert George**
> *Parent of primary pupil*

Rupert George, who has a child at the school, said the streets nearby were no longer safe for pupils arriving and leaving. "They have removed the play space structures that we built on two roads and just shoved the fences back to the pavements.

"We have a really confusing and unsafe situation now. There is some signage indicating this is a school street with timed closures to traffic but the law backing that up has now expired. That is why we wanted to keep the structures while we worked out the next steps for keeping children safe here.

"This morning two lorries came up and couldn't fit through together; one parent had a lorry reverse back as she was crossing with her five-year-old."

The wooden structure creating a roadside play space was part of measures introduced in April 2021. It was originally designed during Covid to allow children to mingle, but campaigners argue it has become part of protective measures against traffic. Some neighbours say the structure is unsightly and should be replaced with timed closures.

Rahman has been vocal in his opposition to traffic reduction schemes and street closures. The council has been contacted for comment.

In a previous statement, it said: "The Chisenhale primary school street was established through an experimental traffic order … The Eto has now lapsed and the mayor has decided, in keeping with his manifesto promise … that the road closures will not be made permanent."

The mayor added that the council took the safety of children "extremely seriously" and was considering alternatives to the scheme, such as zebra crossings and traffic wardens.

▼ *Paislie Reid as Red Riding Hood and Damien James as the wolf in the Everyman's rock'n'roll pantomime*
PHOTOGRAPH: MARC BRENNER



Review Creaky Red Riding Hood saved by its songs

The Rock'n'Roll Panto Red Riding Hood
Everyman theatre, Liverpool
★★★☆☆

Mark Fisher

We are deep into act two when we find ourselves outside the palm house in Sefton Park, where two Liver Birds in blue Lycra are sharing their wisdom. Played by Adam Keast and Ben Welch, they are all attitude and abrasive scouse backchat.

It is not an extraordinary scene but it stands out because so far in Peter Rowe's panto, there have been few Merseyside references. Surprising, because the rock'n'roll panto is such an Everyman institution – on the go since the 1980s – that you expect something with Liverpool written all the way through it.

But that is not what makes Suba Das's production a stretch – and, at three hours, it's a big one. No, that is down to a show that is high on exuberance but low on wit. Rowe's jokes are creaky – signalling the creakiest with drum rolls does not improve them – and his script's reliance on innuendo tiresome. For all the spangly costumes and boisterous performances, the actors have too little chance to show their funny bones.

It is also that the story of Red Riding Hood is ill-suited to panto. Yes, it has an adventurous and vulnerable lead – here, a wide-eyed Paislie Reid leads us into the woods – but even if you accept the wolf as a pantomime baddie, it makes little sense to present the grandmother as a cross-dressing dame.

Rowe adds romance by importing a chunk of Cinderella (Keaton Guimarães-Tolley playing an undercover prince with the gawky charm of Michael Nesmith from the Monkees). But the more he strays from the archetypal story, the more convoluted it becomes.

None of this seems to concern the audience, whose primary pleasure is in the music. Under musical director Rob Green, this is the show's great strength, whether it be the wolf (Damien James) playing heavy metal while swinging down a rope or Reid kicking off I Wanna Dance With Somebody at half speed and finishing it with a kettle-drum solo.

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NETFLIX | 9 DECEMBER

Ministers say unions partly to blame for crises at train firms

Gwyn Topham
Transport correspondent

Ministers insisted yesterday that the crises at Avanti West Coast and TransPennine Express were partly the fault of rail unions, as Labour demanded action, claiming 18,000 northern services had been "lost" in a month.

The rail minister Huw Merriman told MPs the government would be deciding early in the new year whether to renew Avanti's contract, as he spoke of concerns over whether the operator would restore its timetable as promised this month.

In a debate forced by an urgent question in the Commons, Labour demanded the government put the two operators on a "binding and remedial plan" to restore services, after months of chaos and cancellations blighting the northern economy and lives of passengers.

The shadow transport secretary, Louise Haigh, said: "Today almost 40 services have been cancelled on TPE [TransPennine Express] alone.

"If this were happening elsewhere, the government would have taken far greater action." She added: "Six years ago, TPE had exactly the same issues … Here we are again in crisis and it's the public paying the price."

Haigh said the government had "continued to reward failure", including signing off on a decision for £12m in dividends to be paid by Avanti to its owners, FirstGroup and Trenitalia, and urged ministers to "claw back taxpayers' money".

Labour said Avanti and TPE had cut 18,000 trains a month, with figures from the Office of Rail and Road showing that there were only 61,000 planned services for the four-week period to 12 November, compared with 79,000 in the same period in 2018. The "planned services" figure allows a fairer comparison, it argues, as cuts made before 10pm the night before a scheduled service are excluded from cancellation figures.

Merriman told MPs the government would be holding the operators to account, but blamed unions for the breakdown of agreements over rest day working. He said: "We recognise current performance is not acceptable and having a significant effect."

Avanti's contract was renewed in October for six months, but Merriman suggested the operator would only have until January to prove it was fit to run the service. He said ministers "will need to see improvements in place in the beginning of the year", when they would make the decision.



▲ *TransPennine Express and Avanti have brought chaos to the north*

However, he said that the trouble at Avanti and TPE was down to a number of factors, including sickness and working overtime. He said Avanti had trained 100 more drivers to help restore services later this month following timetable changes on 11 December, but warned: "It will be very difficult to put that in place … The plan is 11 December, but if we can't get the strikes called off, my concern is our ability to roll that out."

The RMT union has called four 48-hour strikes in the next two months, starting on 13-14 December. On Wednesday, the TSSA union said staff would strike at Avanti on 13, 14, 16 and 17 December and at c2c on 17 December.

Merriman said TPE had paid its drivers 1.75 times the rate for rest day working under an agreement that ended last December, while Covid had exacerbated a lack of drivers by slowing training.

MPs on all sides urged the rail minister to outline what action would be taken. The Tory MP Chris Clarkson said Avanti appeared to be running "a schedule designed using a tombola".

Merriman said that he would soon meet union and rail bosses together in a room.

Sketch
John Crace



Merriman left to defend the the indefensible over services that have been run off the rails

Turning up at any station on the Avanti west coast line is an article of faith. The timetable is just wishful thinking. Trains are cancelled, delayed or disappeared seemingly at will. And if you do find one going in your general direction you're expected to be so grateful that you don't notice there are no seats left. Much the same goes for the ironically named TransPennine Express. You'd hate to take the non-Express service. It may be quicker to walk.

So it was no surprise that yesterday Labour was granted an urgent question to see if there was any chance the performance of these two rail franchises might improve any time soon. Similar UQs about the railways get asked at least once a month. Not that anyone was expecting any more enlightening answers, but it was important to let everyone know someone was bothered about it.

This time it was the junior transport minister, Huw Merriman, who was left to explain why the government still hadn't been able to make the trains run. And to his credit, Merriman made a better fist of it than other useful idiots sent out to defend the indefensible in the Commons while the secretary of state runs for cover in Whitehall. He didn't just plead stupidity for 45 minutes, as most do. Not only did he actually appear to know something about trains, he also appeared to care. Unheard of.

He started by making no excuses. The services were completely unacceptable. Something must be done. Though he wasn't quite sure what. The thing was, it was all a bit of a mess. There had been more people than usual who had called in sick over the past six months. And those who normally volunteered to do overtime had chosen instead just to work their regular hours. How very inconsiderate of them.

Sadly, though, Merriman was unable to join the dots. Perhaps Avanti and the TransPennine Express should rethink a business model that depended on only a few people going off sick and the rest filling in for them on overtime. How about actually employing a few more people to fill the vacancies? Or how about accepting Avanti and TPE have had their day in the sun and get someone else in to run the franchises?

> *Not that anyone was expecting any more enlightening answers, but it was important to let everyone know that someone was bothered*

The shadow transport secretary, Louise Haigh, had some sympathy for Merriman. But not much. Businesses in the north were suffering with people unable to get to work. The number of cancellations was even higher than the published rate, because as long as Avanti cancelled a service by 10pm the night before it was scheduled it wasn't officially cancelled. It was just a train that never ran. The vanished. And, she hated to point out, the rail companies had promised to increase their staffing levels six years earlier when the trains were screwed up, and amazingly nothing had happened.

Merriman looked agonised. He briefly tried to blame the unions for not agreeing to change their working practices faster. Like coming in to work when they were sick. Or working 24-hour shifts.

But he didn't even sound as if he had convinced himself. Especially when Tory after Tory weighed in to say train services were in a terrible state all across the country. Merriman promised everyone a one-to-one meeting with him to discuss what they weren't going to do to make things better. He won't have a lot of spare time between now and Christmas.

The railways, along with the Royal Mail, NHS and schools, were also up for grabs on Sky News where Kay Burley was talking to union leaders about strikes. It was fairly gentle stuff. There seems recognition that people have been pushed far enough and the union demands are no more than fair.

"We just want to be able to negotiate with government," they all pleaded at the end. Their frustration was all too evident. But ministers don't want to be negotiated with. They don't know how to manage the crisis and have run for the hills.

Either that or they're lost in the Avanti black hole.



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Inside Sport
Runs flow as England return to Pakistan
Tourists record four centuries on day one
Page 38 →



'Take a moment'
Rosen pays poetic tribute to NHS staff who saved his life

Nadia Khomami
Arts and culture correspondent

Michael Rosen does not remember much from his 48 days on an intensive care ward after he was struck down with Covid two years ago. But thanks to a patient diary diligently kept by his nurses, the poet and former children's laureate knows how faithfully and compassionately he was cared for.

"They were wonderful. In the diary they tell me how they held my hand, talked to me, sang to me, kept me awake when they were worried that my blood pressure was dipping dangerously low, shaving me, turning me over," he said.

Rosen, now 76, was told he had a 50/50 chance of survival before he was put into an induced coma for more than a month. After his near-death experience he said he felt duty bound to speak of his gratitude to those who saved his life. Now, in tribute to NHS nurses and other healthcare workers, Rosen has written a poem, entitled This Is You, You're Looking at You.

Given reports that 40,000 nurses have left the NHS in a year because of stress, he has also helped launch an app, ShinyMind, aimed at supporting the mental health and overall wellbeing of nurses.

"When I was in hospital I could see the kind of strain the nurses

This Is You, You're Looking at You

This is you.
You're looking at you.
Look closely.
Closer.
Listen to the breathing.
Is it calm?
Or is there a bit of a gasp
or a snatch in there?
What about the walk?
Watch the walk.
In control, is it?
The feet roll from heel to toe
do they?
What next?
How about the eyes?
Look closely at the eyes.
Eyes tell you a lot.
The skin round the eyes.
Is it tight?
More on one side than the other?
And is that a frown?
Is it always there
or can it smooth out?
This is you.
You're looking at you.
Now what comes next is harder.
See if you can notice any part of
you
that's tight, taut,
a part you that you're holding
tighter and tauter
than it should be
and you don't know why:
a shoulder maybe
one side of your neck?
Is there any way that can be looser?
This is you
You're looking at you.
Now this is difficult.
We're going in.
What about sleep?
Honestly.
Do you sleep through the night?
Or do you lie awake in the middle of
the night
and you don't know why?
What do you think about?
Does the day before
come in and sit there keeping you
awake?
Does tomorrow
come in and sit there keeping you
awake?
Have you ever talked to someone
about what keeps you awake?
You could, you know.
Sometimes, talking about it
scares off the things that keep you
awake.
This is you
You're looking at you.
Are there things you could do
which would look after you?
Places you could go
People you could see
Shows you could watch
Things you could do.
What are they?
Shut your eyes.
Imagine you're doing them.
Imagine you're doing them.
Imagine you're doing them.
Have you ever tried ways
of expressing what you feel?
Drawing?
Writing?
Movement?
What would you draw?
What would you write?
How would you move?
Imagine you're doing them
Imagine you're doing them
Imagine you're doing them
And you know why I'm asking you
to ask yourself all these questions
don't you?
It's for that old, old reason:
if you don't look after you
you can't look after others.
This is you.
You're looking at you.
Michael Rosen



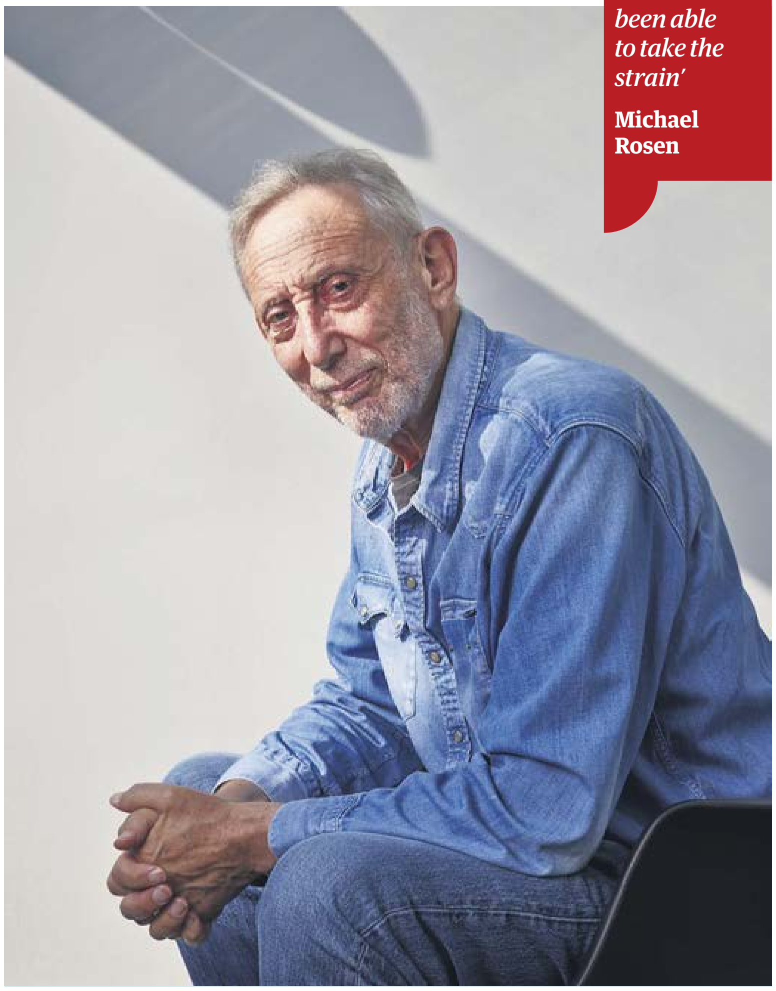
were under but it was only when I came out that I understood this. In my intensive care ward, where the death rate was 42%, nurses that usually work one nurse per patient were [with] three or four patients. They had to repeatedly dress up in full PPE gear. Nurses were getting ill, some of them died.

All this, Rosen added, was hugely stressful. "In fact, when I met some of the nurses afterwards one or two said that they had found it extremely hard to carry on, if not impossible. I think about myself at their age, and whether I would have been able to take that kind of mental and physical strain, day in day, out. No, I wouldn't."

The poem suggests nurses "take a moment" to look at themselves. "Are there questions they can ask of themselves or even make suggestions about how to treat themselves nicely? No one can make sacrifices all the time. You just end up trying to run on empty. So I wanted to help. A way of giving back something to them."

It is important that nurses "check their state of mind, check their state of health, use their breaks and free time to leave the workplace", Rosen said.

His words come amid warnings that the NHS is on its knees following years of underfunding. Hospitals and clinics are short-



'I think about myself at their age and whether I would have been able to take the strain'

Michael Rosen

◀ *Michael Rosen said he supported nurses' intention to strike because he trusted their democratic decision*
PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID LEVENE/THE GUARDIAN

staffed, waiting lists are at record numbers, and ambulance crews could not respond to almost one in four 999 calls last month. Nurses across the UK are to go on strike for the first time, over two days in the fortnight before Christmas, after ministers rejected their pleas for formal talks over NHS pay.

Rosen called the NHS a "brilliant and wonderful invention", adding that a national health service was how a people or nation looked after and cared for itself.

He said: "The NHS involves the cooperation of thousands of people every second, every minute, every hour of every day. Every day there are millions of interventions that help people. This is a collective effort of mind and body, testament to what human beings can do for each other. We should have treasured this institution, supporting it, improving it, ensuring that it is there solely for the purpose of helping people."

He said he supported nurses' intention to strike because he trusted their decision. "For nurses to have never taken this level of action before tells us how provoked they must be. I don't see it as my job to arbitrate on what they're worth. A group of devoted workers under enormous stress have taken a democratic decision," he said.

He came out of his coma after 40 days and spent three weeks in rehabilitation. The author, who wrote We're Going on a Bear Hunt, also published a book last year, entitled Many Kinds of Love, in which he told of his stay in hospital and return home.

A children's book, Sticky McStickstick: The Friend Who Helped Me Walk Again, also detailed his transformation from being unable to stand up by himself to a grandfather who proudly walks home, into the open arms of his beloved family.

He has said that he found his rehabilitation experience "utterly infantilising" - so it made sense for him to write a children's book about it. On one occasion he was told to throw a balloon; on another he was re-learning how to get up from a bench and was told to put his hands behind him and his nose over his toes.

"The nurses were there to assist the physiotherapists and occupational therapists to teach me how to stand up, to walk with a frame or a stick, and then to walk unaided," he recalled. "They were unbelievably good-humoured about it, kind and helpful."

REFUGEE WINTER EMERGENCY • REFUGEE WINTER EMERGENCY



Farhana* (7) and her brother Najeebullah* (5) now live in Kabul, Afghanistan, after fleeing with their family from Nangarhar Province.

Will you give £78 to help provide a Winter Survival Kit, which could protect a refugee family from the deadly cold of winter?

Right now, refugee families across the world are facing a threat as dangerous as the conflict that forced them to flee their homes – the freezing winter weather.

Many displaced families are living in bomb damaged, unheated buildings or makeshift shelters that can collapse under the weight of snow. With winter setting in, they face a battle to survive. In countries like Ukraine, Afghanistan and Syria, lives are at grave risk from hypothermia and potentially fatal respiratory diseases such as pneumonia.

In response, UK for UNHCR has launched **The Cold Truth**: an urgent appeal asking people in the UK to help provide refugees with the winter essentials they need to survive.

Please will you give £78 to help provide a refugee family with a Winter Survival Kit of lifesaving essentials?

Your £78 could help provide items such as mattresses, blankets and warm clothes, and tarpaulins for a family to insulate their shelters from the wind, rain and snow. UNHCR has the logistical capabilities to ensure your support reaches the most vulnerable families but, at the moment, our funds are fully stretched.

Your support is especially critical this winter, as the economic ripple effect of the Ukraine conflict has seen huge hikes in fuel and food prices in places like Afghanistan, Syria and their neighbouring countries – leaving winter basics like fuel, warm clothes and food completely out of reach to many.

Refugees are in danger. Please act today to help UNHCR teams on the ground to save lives. **With a gift of £78, you could help a refugee family survive winter.**



£78 could help provide a Winter Survival Kit containing essentials such as bedding, warm clothes and fuel. **WINTER SURVIVAL KIT**

*Names have been changed for protection purposes.

The Winter Survival Kit is an example of the humanitarian items UNHCR provides to displaced families, based on average costs of those items across the countries where UNHCR works.

Give now at
unrefugees.org.uk/winter-guardian
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I would like to give: ☐ **£78** ☐ **£156** ☐ **Other £** ________

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☐ I would like to make a donation by debit/credit card

Card no. Expiry date /

Signature Date / /

☐ Tick here, if you don't want to receive an acknowledgement by post

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Postcode
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*Please provide your details to receive updates by email and/or phone on the impact of your support, future appeals and details of other ways you may wish to help.

Please return this form along with your cheque to:
Freepost UK FOR UNHCR (you don't need a stamp)

Increase your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate
☐ I would like UK for UNHCR to claim Gift Aid on this donation (currently 25p for each £1 donated), as well as any donations I make in the future and have made in the past four years to UK for UNHCR, until I notify you otherwise. I confirm I am a UK taxpayer and I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand that council tax and VAT do not qualify. If your circumstances change or you have any questions, please contact our **Supporter Care Team** on **0800 029 3883** or email **supportercare@unrefugees.org.uk**

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Eyewitness



▼ Yucatán peninsula, Mexico
Flamingos in the Ría Lagartos Biosphere, in an image shortlisted for wildlife photographer of the year
PHOTOGRAPH: CLAUDIO CONTRERAS KOOB



World

Trump tax returns handed over at last - but Democrats running out of time to act

Martin Pengelly
New York

A US House of Representatives committee has a little more than a month to decide what to do with six years' worth of Donald Trump's tax returns, after a years-long court fight ended late on Wednesday with the records handed to Congress.

The supreme court ordered the release of Trump's returns to the House ways and means committee last week, rejecting the former president's plea. Trump consistently accused the Democratic-led committee of being politically motivated.

The committee had been seeking returns spanning 2015 to 2020, which it said it needed in order to establish whether the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) was properly auditing presidential returns, and whether new legislation was needed.

A US treasury spokesperson said the department had "complied with last week's court decision", though it declined to say if the committee had accessed the documents.

According to CNN, Democrats on the panel were due to be briefed yesterday on the "legal ramifications on section of the tax law that … [Richard] Neal used to request Trump's tax returns" but they would not immediately see the returns.

Richard Neal, the Democratic chair of the House ways and means committee, "declined to say if he had seen" the returns himself, CNN said. Asked if Democrats would release the returns to the public, Neal said: "The next step is to have a meeting of the Democratic caucus."

The House will soon slip from Democratic hands, although the party has retained control of the Senate.

On Wednesday an aide told Reuters that Democrats on the Senate finance committee, the counterpart to the House ways and means, were considering their options over any action relating to Trump's tax returns.

One House Republican indicated that he expected the returns to become public one way or another.

Troy Nehls, a member of the hard-right Trump-supporting Freedom Caucus, tweeted: "The IRS just gave six years of Donald Trump's tax returns to the House ways and means committee. How long until someone 'leaks' them?"

The House committee first requested Trump's returns in 2019. Trump, who on 15 November began his third consecutive run for the presidency, dragged the issue through the court system.

It was long customary, though not required, for major party presidential candidates to release their tax records. Trump was the first such candidate in 40 years not to do so.

> ***'Republicans who knew Trump in New York speculated he was worried people would see the actual amount he made'***
>
> **Maggie Haberman**
> *In her book on Trump*



▼ *Trump Organization lawyer Susan Necheles, centre, returns to court in New York, where the company faces charges including criminal tax fraud*
PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL M SANTIAGO/GETTY

Financial and taxation practices at the Trump Organization are under scrutiny in criminal and civil cases in New York. Attorneys yesterday began closing arguments in the criminal tax fraud case.

The editorial board of the Washington Post said Trump's records should be released because "voters should expect to know what financial conflicts of interest [candidates for president] might bring to the job".

The board added: "In [Trump's] case … in addition to his tax records he should have provided a detailed accounting of his holdings and interests. His refusal to do so became glaring as [he] pressed to reform the tax code in 2017. Americans could only guess how its provisions might personally enrich the president and his family."

In her recent book, Confidence Man: The Making of Donald Trump and the Breaking of America, Maggie Haberman, a New York Times reporter, described how Trump came up with his excuse for not releasing his tax returns. On his campaign plane, just before Super Tuesday, 1 March, in the 2016 Republican primary, Trump reportedly "thought for a second about how to get [himself] out of this [and] leaned back, before snapping up to a sudden thought - 'well, you know my taxes are under audit. I always get audited … so what I mean is, well I could just say, I'll release them when I'm no longer under audit. Cause I'll never not be under audit.'"

Later, in a debate against his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton, Trump famously answered the charge that he "did not pay any federal income tax" by saying: "That makes me smart."

Haberman also reported that "Republicans who knew Trump in New York" never expected him to release his tax records, "speculating that he was more worried that people would see the actual amount of money he made than he was about scrutiny into his sources of income".

Shortly before the 2020 election, the New York Times revealed that Trump had reported heavy losses over several years to offset hundreds of millions of dollars in income, according to reporting and trial testimony. That allowed him to pay very little in taxes.

Trump said: "Totally fake news, no. Actually I paid tax. And you'll see that as soon as my tax returns - it's under audit, they've been under audit for a long time. The [IRS] … they treat me very badly."



'The worst I have seen' Little food or shelter for the children of Somalia's drought

Tracy McVeigh
Galmudug

Out on the red earth plain, scattered with shards of thorny shrub, the graves are shallow. Not even a strong, well-fed man or woman could dig far into this baked ground.

There are a few concrete marker stones with names scratched on and dates of death in the past month or so, but most are simple mounds of earth patted into shape and topped with bouquets of thorns. This morning, Minhaad Abdi Khalif was buried here - in a row, it looks like, of mostly children. But already the grave appears timelessly embedded in the landscape.

Her daughter had been very stressed, says Khalif's mother, Fadum Mohamoud Gure, who lived with her at the internally displaced persons (IDP) camp at Xaarxaar, south of Galkayo town in the region of Galmudug. Gure believes it was high blood pressure that killed her

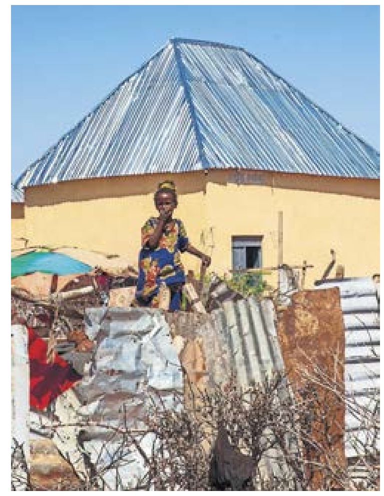
Big cheese
Biden and Macron in White House summit
Page 30

On the prowl
Five captive lions get taste of freedom
Page 31





◀ *Inside South Galkayo hospital, which has a unit for severe malnutrition cases; right, a child in Xaarxaar camp near Galkayo*
ALL PHOTOGRAPHS: GARY CALTON/THE GUARDIAN



38-year-old daughter, who was worried sick about the lack of food for her hungry children. She had no medication for the condition, and was seventh of 12 siblings to die prematurely.

Khalif's 10 orphaned children sit on the ground around their grandmother, ranging in age from eight months to the eldest boy of 12.

"She was a cattle farmer and came here when the cattle all died from the drought. Her first husband had died of cancer and her second died nine months ago. I don't know why," says Gure, who is 80, rocking the baby. "Sometimes they eat and sometimes they don't," she says of the children. "They drink water if they can and they try to sleep. We can sleep but the children cannot sleep because their hunger makes them scratch their bodies and then they wake up."

Last year two grandchildren, aged two and three, died of measles. Like pneumonia, measles preys on the weakness of a malnourished child. Around Galkayo town there are 74 camps and in this camp, which houses more than 10,000 people, children are dying. Acute malnutrition rates are running at 52% among under-fives, the highest rate in Somalia, and this region is on the brink of famine. Asked how many funerals she has attended this year, Gure shakes her head: "A lot."



◀ *Degaan camp east of Galkayo, where 700 people have arrived, some from hundreds of miles away, fleeing drought*



▶ *Mohamud Adan Barte with his elderly mother in their shelter. This is the first time he has had to flee his home for a camp*

Bashir Abshir Jama is a single father. He has been sitting in South Galkayo hospital for three days with his 11-year-old daughter, Yusur, helplessly watching fever rack the body of his malnourished four-year-old son, Mohamed, who lies under a mosquito net hung askew over a mattress.

"Only God knows what will happen," he says. "The children are my priority, of course, but finding work is hard. Sometimes you earn a little money, sometimes you don't."

The hospital has a stabilisation centre for malnutrition cases with severe complications, supported by the UN children's agency, Unicef. Asked if he blames *abaar* - the drought - for Mohamed's condition, his father shrugs. "The drought is everywhere, this place is no different, nowhere is any different. There is no place to go where there is not drought."

Hani Ali Osman has just arrived at Degaan IDP camp east of Galkayo town. The single mother is with her three-year-old son, Suliman, who is disabled. About 700 people are already at the camp, having left homes and farms hundreds of miles away because of the drought. The food that is available has risen 125% in price since February, aggravating the severe hunger and child malnutrition. Osman has come from Beledweyne in Hiran district, which has seen a rise in attacks by Al-Shabaab militants and drought has scraped the earth clean of plants and animals.

"There was no one to support me there so I came here. I was told there was food here," she says.

Suliman has been given protein paste and other women have got together to help find the two of them a place to sleep. "[Osman] is vulnerable and so the community will make a contribution to help her. If we have space we will host her in our shelters," says Malyaun Osman Omar.

Omar is from the same area and clan as the young mother but she has her own worries because her daughter is severely depressed. Khadro Qalbi Abdullah's mental health has deteriorated since her husband divorced her and left her alone with their four children, says Omar. Last week, neighbours rescued her after she tried to burn down a shelter around her; they brought her here to her mother.

"She has a kettle," says Omar, getting upset and covering her eyes briefly with her scarf. "That is it. That is all she has, she doesn't even have a mat to sleep on. Last night she wandered off and left the children here alone."

> ***'Sometimes they eat, sometimes they don't. They drink some water and they try to sleep'***
>
> **Grandmother to 10 orphaned children**

In the camps around Galkayo, about 130,000 people are living in mostly empty shelters with bare earth floors. Mohamud Adan Barte has built a raised platform for a sleeping mat for his 90-year-old mother, who is blind. He has seen too many puff adders slither into the tent where she sleeps.

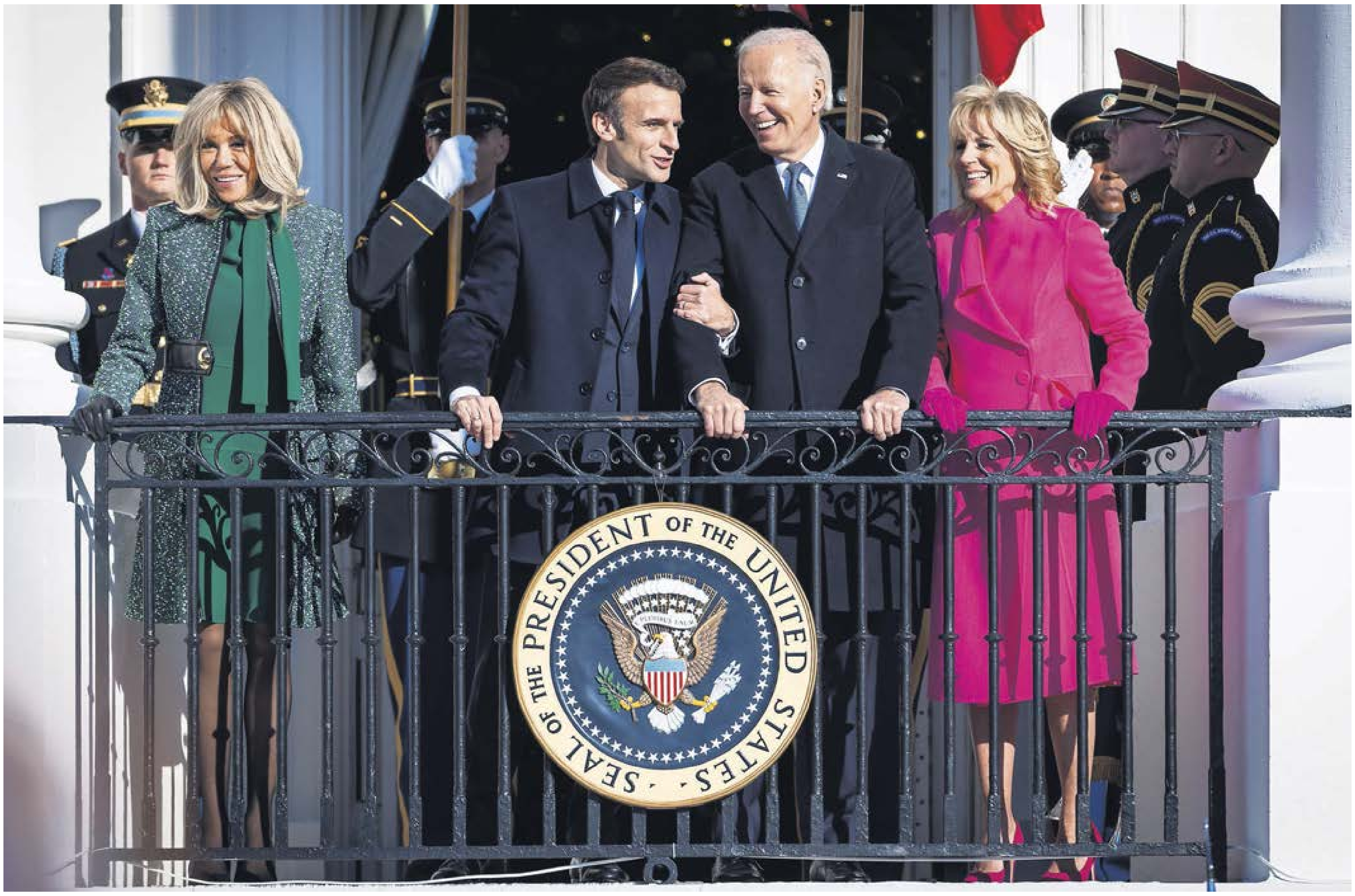
Barte, 65, is proud of his former life as a businessman dealing in livestock, and of the cement house that he built for his family. This is the first time he has been an IDP. "This is the worst I have seen. The drought has borne down on the animals and left us like this - without any food. We came here two months ago but it is only a poor shelter we can build here. People come and register our names and ask questions but no one has anything to give us.

"My mother sleeps all the time and I am close to being blind, too, as my own eyesight is fading. It seems we are people left to die of snake bites and hunger and disease."

Nuro Yusef is a 60-year-old birth attendant who says she has delivered about 500 babies in the Xaarxaar camp in the 18 months since she arrived here. "Babies are much smaller than normal now. A lot of pregnant women are aborting in the first trimester," she says.

"But the big problem in the camps is that there is so little protection, especially at night. There are no lights, no fences and violence and rape against women is a problem - when women go to fetch water or look for firewood or even to the toilet. If there is a rape or attempted rape, it is impossible to find the perpetrator, and the men who do this know that."

▼ *Joe and Jill Biden, right, welcome Emmanuel and Brigitte Macron to the US for their state visit yesterday*
PHOTOGRAPH: JIM LO SCALZO/EPA



Grand fromage
On the White House menu

It's bold of the Americans to meet the French over wine and cheese. But Jill Biden was set on offering her country's best to the French president, Emmanuel Macron, his wife, Brigitte, and their entourage at a White House dinner yesterday.

As the Élysée Palace unveiled a list of gifts Macron will offer Joe , the US president's wife revealed the menu for the night's gala dinner, served under a large tent in the gardens. Delicacies included lobster, beef, and squash from the White House garden – as well as a blue cheese from north-western Oregon that in 2019 was the first US product to win the world cheese championships.

Toasts were made with an American sparkling wine, in glasses from France. And the evening was hosted by the jazz musician Jon Batiste, who is from the former French province of Louisiana, which Macron will visit today.
Agence France-Presse


Cheese came from Rogue Creamery in Oregon

Biden seeks to heal rift with Macron in 'tweak' to trade plan

David Smith
Washington

Joe Biden has sought to heal a rift with Emmanuel Macron and other European leaders over trade, admitting there were "glitches" in a $739bn package of investment legislation that he said could be fixed.

The US president was speaking yesterday while hosting Macron for the first state visit of his presidency. He and the French president expressed unity over support for Ukraine amid the war, but faced questions about their differences on trade.

America's Inflation Reduction Act is set to pour billions of dollars into environmentally friendly industries, with strong backing for American-based manufacturers. The White House touts the act as a groundbreaking effort to restart domestic manufacturing and promote renewable technologies while challenging Chinese dominance.

But EU governments have cried foul at the "Made in America" emphasis, and threatened a trade war, by subsidising a green economy sector.

In a joint press conference, Biden said of the legislation: "There's obviously going to be glitches in it and need to reconcile changes in it." He promised "tweaks", adding that the US "never intended to exclude folks that were cooperating with us".

"My point is we're back in business, we're going to continue to create manufacturing jobs but not at the expense of Europe."

Macron said he had explained to Biden that the legislation's subsidies could kill off some green energy projects but he accepted that these were unintended consequences.

"We have no alternative but to work together. We need to resynchronise together." Macron said France wanted to rebuild its manufacturing base after 50 years of industrial decline. "We want to succeed together, not one at the expense of the other."

Some regard Macron's pomp-filled visit as a lavish apology from Washington after last year's bitter spat over the way Australia pulled out of a French submarine deal in favour of acquiring US nuclear subs.

Speaking in the east room, beside Christmas trees, Biden said: "Emmanuel has also become a friend. Occasionally we have some slight differences, but never in a fundamental way." The 80-year-old president and his wife, Jill, had greeted Macron and his wife, Brigitte, with hugs, kisses and smiles at a south lawn ceremony.

Macron, 44, repeatedly placed his hand on Biden's back as they walked together and pledged to uphold the "unwavering" US-French alliance ahead of talks on Ukraine, China and a looming trade dispute.

Members of the marines, army and air force, and a detachment of soldiers in 18th-century revolutionary war garb, paraded in front of the White House. Artillery fired a 21-gun salute, sending white smoke into the sunny but chilly December sky.

Biden praised Macron as "not just the leader of France" but for being "very outspoken and very, very commanding in Europe".

> **'We want to succeed together – not one being at the expense of the other'**
> **Emmanuel Macron**
> *French president*

The visit is a boost to Macron diplomatically that he can leverage back in Europe. It could burnish his image as the EU's most visible and vocal leader at a time when Europe is increasingly concerned that its economy will be indelibly weakened by the Ukraine war and energy and inflation crises.

At the press conference Biden said he had been shocked by Russia's brutality in Ukraine but insisted that Vladimir Putin was "not going to succeed". "President Macron and I have resolved that we're going to continue working together to hold Russia accountable for their actions and to mitigate the global impacts of Putin's war on the rest of the world."

Macron and his wife went to the US bearing gifts including a copy of the soundtrack from the 1966 film Un Homme et une Femme, which the Bidens saw on their first date. The Bidens gave Macron a mirror made with fallen wood from the White House grounds and a vinyl record collection of American musicians.

France backs plans for tribunal to try Russian leaders over war

Isobel Koshiw *Kyiv*
Jennifer Rankin *Brussels*

France has become the first major western state to publicly back the creation of a special tribunal to try top Russian officials, potentially including Vladimir Putin, for the crime of aggression in Ukraine.

The French foreign ministry said on Wednesday that it was working with its European partners on the proposal. The statement came after the European Union, and the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, supported the tribunal in a speech.


▲ *A child in front of a building hit by airstrikes in Vyshhorod near Kyiv*

The defendants at such a tribunal would be those with decision-making power involved in committing the crime of aggression, meaning the transgression of Ukraine's borders by the Russian military. This would very likely mean just a handful of figures, including Putin as well as the foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, and the defence minister, Sergei Shoigu.

If they were convicted, even in absentia, the sentence would label Putin and his team international criminals and render any negotiations nearly impossible.

France's announcement is a strong indicator that the west is becoming disillusioned with the prospect of negotiations with Russia.

The EU wants a specialised court because Russia has not signed the international criminal court (ICC) treaty, leaving the court in The Hague without jurisdiction over "crimes of aggression" committed by the Russian government.

Von der Leyen said on Wednesday that any tribunal would require UN backing. She proposed setting up an independent international tribunal or a specialised court within a national justice system. Ukraine has said the number of states that support such a tribunal is key to enforcing any sentencing.

Officials already know that Russia, a permanent member of the UN security council, will veto any such move. Nevertheless they intend to table a resolution and, once it is shot down, seek support from the UN general assembly. One EU official said they expected "good enough numbers" in the UN to support the idea.

The fact that Russia committed the crime of aggression was overwhelmingly accepted by a vote at the UN general assembly in March.

Ramaphosa delays parliament appearance amid corruption row

Jason Burke
Johannesburg



▲ *Ramaphosa came to power in 2018 promising to tackle corruption*

Cyril Ramaphosa's government plunged further into crisis yesterday, a day after an independent panel appointed by parliament said there was evidence suggesting the South African president committed "serious misconduct" after millions of dollars in cash were reportedly stolen from his private game ranch almost three years ago.

Ramaphosa was expected to answer questions in South Africa's parliament yesterday but postponed his appearance, saying he needed time to consider the panel's timing. The deputy president, David Mabuza, cancelled a keynote address at a World Aids Day event, while key people failed to hold regular briefings.

The rand has fallen sharply amid fears of political instability that will hold back reforms to boost the country's flagging economy.

Ramaphosa, who came to power in 2018, has been accused of holding undeclared foreign currency, tax evasion, failing to inform police about the robbery and misusing state resources by ordering his presidential guards to track down the culprits who then appear to have been paid off.

"We think the president has a case to answer on the origin of the foreign currency that was stolen, as well as the underlying transaction for it," said the report by the panel published late on Wednesday. "This is a very serious matter, which, if established, renders … a serious violation [of the constitution and anti-graft laws] and a serious misconduct."

Ramaphosa denies any wrongdoing and has welcomed a separate police inquiry into the allegations, nicknamed Farmgate by local media. He has not been charged with any crime. "I categorically deny that I have violated [my presidential] oath in any way, and I similarly deny that I am guilty of any of the allegations made against me," the 70-year-old tycoon, one of South Africa's richest individuals, said in a statement issued by the presidency.

Parliamentarians will vote next week on whether to initiate formal impeachment proceedings against Ramaphosa, an unprecedented step since a new constitution was adopted after the fall of the racist, repressive apartheid regime 28 years ago.

The ruling African National Congress dominates the national assembly, so opposition parties cannot get the two-thirds majority necessary. The decision will depend on the balance of power between factions of the ANC, analysts say.

Supporters of the former president Jacob Zuma have mounted a fierce resistance to Ramaphosa, accusing him of pandering to South Africa's disproportionately wealthy white minority. Zuma was forced out of power amid corruption and mismanagement accusations.

Ramaphosa came to power vowing to clean up the graft, insisting any party official facing criminal charges of corruption leave office pending investigations, and opponents say he should do the same. The ANC will vote this month on whether to replace Ramaphosa as party leader.

Call of the wild: lions' escape from Sydney zoo enclosure caught on film

Mostafa Rachwani





▲ *Ato with his five lion cubs inside their Taronga zoo enclosure in August, and stills from CCTV footage showing their escape*
PHOTOGRAPH: SAAED KHAN/AFP, GETTY



Taronga zoo in Sydney, Australia, has released video footage showing how five lions escaped their enclosure by scratching at and then breaking through the fence.

The five lions - four cubs and an adult male - can be seen clawing at the fence before squeezing underneath it and proceeding to wander around outside their exhibit.

The escape, on 2 November, sparked a lockdown of the zoo with a "code one" alert issued. Staff and visitors sought shelter until the lions were returned to their enclosure.

The footage released yesterday shows the lions sticking close to the fence once they escaped - while lioness Maya remained inside.

Cubs Luzuko, Zuri, Khari, Malika and father Ato all found a way out but, according to a statement from Taronga zoo, they remained calm before trying to return on their own.

"The five lions calmly investigated within metres of their main exhibit, before actively trying to find their way back under the fence as lioness Maya and keepers began calling for them," the zoo said yesterday.

"The cubs and father Ato made several attempts to re-enter the exhibit and male cub Luzuko was the first to successfully do so. He was followed shortly after by female cub Zuri and male cub Khari.

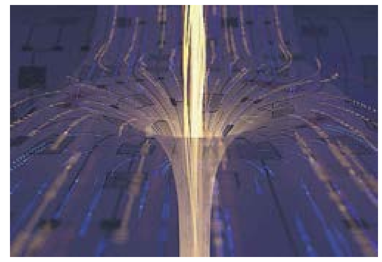
"With encouragement from keepers, Ato returned … to be reunited with his pride."

> *'They calmly investigated within metres of their exhibit before trying to find a way back'*
> **Spokesperson**
> *Taronga zoo*

Maya and her daughter Ayanna remained in the enclosure, with Maya seen calling out to her cubs.

The zoo said cub Malika had to be tranquillised before being transported back to the dens.

An investigation into the incident is ongoing, with the zoo stating an "independent, specialist forensic engineer" was conducting a detailed examination into the fence's failure. The lions are in an "outdoor back-of-house habitat" pending the findings of the review. They will not be back in their main exhibit before Christmas.



▲ *Wormhole behaviour in Caltech's image of the quantum experiment*

Tiny wormhole created in lab offers quantum breakthrough

Reuters

It is a mainstay of science fiction, it is tiny and it does not exist in physical space, but researchers say they have created what is, theoretically, a worm hole.

Researchers simulated two minuscule black holes in a quantum computer and transmitted a message between them through what amounted to a tunnel in space-time.

They said that based on the quantum information transmitted, a traversable wormhole appeared to have emerged, but that no rupture of space and time was physically created in the experiment, according to the study published in the journal Nature on Wednesday.

A wormhole - a rupture in space and time - is considered a bridge between two remote regions in the universe. Scientists refer to them as Einstein-Rosen bridges after the two physicists who described them, Albert Einstein and Nathan Rosen.

"It looks like a duck, it walks like a duck, it quacks like a duck," said physicist and study co-author Joseph Lykken of Fermilab, the US's particle physics and accelerator laboratory. "So that's what we can say at this point - that we have something that in terms of the properties we look at, it looks like a wormhole."

Maria Spiropulu, a physicist at Caltech in California and a co-author, described it as having the characteristics of a "baby wormhole", and now hopes to make "adult wormholes and toddler wormholes step by step".

Experts who were not involved said it was important to note that a physical wormhole had not been created. Daniel Harlow, a physicist at MIT, told the New York Times the experiment was based on simple modelling that could just as well have been done using pencil and paper.

"I'd say that this doesn't teach us anything about quantum gravity that we didn't already know," Harlow wrote. "On the other hand, I think it is exciting as a technical achievement, because if we can't even do this (and until now we couldn't), then simulating more interesting quantum gravity theories would be off the table."

The study authors made it clear they were at a very early stage. "People ask me, 'Can you put your dog in the wormhole?' No," Spiropulu told reporters. "That's a huge leap."



◀ Medical staff earlier this week in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, where some controls have been lifted
PHOTOGRAPH: ANADOLU AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES

China signals shift in stance on Covid as some measures eased

Helen Davidson
Taipei

One of China's most senior pandemic response officials said on Wednesday that the country was entering a "new stage and mission", in the latest indication of the government's changing approach after mass protests against its zero-Covid policy.

Sun Chunlan, China's vice-premier, made the comments to national health officials, according to the Xinhua state media outlet. It came as several regions, including Shanghai, began to lift lockdowns despite continuing high case numbers.

Sun was reported to have said: "With the decreasing pathogenicity of the Omicron variant, the increasing vaccination rate and the accumulating experience of outbreak control and prevention, China's pandemic containment faces a new stage and mission."

She was attending a roundtable meeting of health experts, who Xinhua said praised China's efforts before offering suggestions on "improving" current measures. Sun said China was taking a more "humane approach" with its outbreak responses. Like the health officials who addressed the country on Tuesday, she did not refer to the "dynamic zero-Covid" policy by name, but instead emphasised vaccinations and other measures.

In recent days Chinese officials have begun to emphasise the lower severity of the Omicron variant of Covid-19. State media has also begun to publish reassurances that the public should not panic over Omicron.

The shift in tone comes alongside a new vaccination drive aimed at elderly people announced on Tuesday. More than 90% of China's population has received at least two doses of a vaccine, but the rate drops sharply among elderly demographics, especially those over 80.

In a further potential loosening of restrictions, China may soon allow some people who test positive for Covid to quarantine at home, Reuters reported yesterday. This would not apply to all cases, but pregnant women, elderly people and those with underlying illnesses will qualify to isolate at home, the news agency said, citing unnamed sources.

> *'With the experience of outbreak control, China's containment faces a new stage'*
>
> **Sun Chunlan**
> *China's vice-premier*

China reported 36,061 Covid cases on Wednesday, a slight drop on Tuesday's 37,828. Yesterday, 24 districts in Shanghai designated as "high risk" were released from lockdown measures, state media said. It followed the easing of lockdowns across 11 districts in Guangzhou on Wednesday, despite rising cases in both cities.

While authorities are showing no tolerance for protests and are continuing to track down and sometimes detain people who demonstrated, analysts have said the changes are a sign the government is listening to protesters, even if it is not publicly acknowledging them.

The protests have also coincided with the death of the former Chinese leader Jiang Zemin. The 96-year-old, who became head of the Communist party during the Tiananmen protests and then presided over years of economic expansion, died on Wednesday, state media said. The timing has put observers on alert - there is a tradition in China of people using public mourning events for past leaders to express discontent with the existing regime.

China's changing approach to Covid came as Xi met the European Council president, Charles Michel, in Beijing. Michel, who chairs meetings of the European Union's 27 national leaders, said the pair had talked for three hours, discussing the war in Ukraine, the EU-China relationship, the climate crisis and coronavirus. Michel told reporters he had raised China's Covid measures but did not give details of Xi's response.

Michel said he had stressed that European companies were willing to provide vaccines to China if they were approved by Chinese authorities. He had also explained how Europe had developing vaccines as a way out of lockdowns, he said.

The German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, met Xi in Beijing last month, where he also extolled Europe's experience of using mRNA vaccines such as the Pfizer/BioNTech jab.

Additional reporting
Jennifer Rankin *Brussels*

Jiang Zemin
Tight control on mourning for ex-leader amid protests

Verna Yu

The body of the former Chinese leader Jiang Zemin has arrived in Beijing after being driven through the streets of Shanghai in a highly choreographed scene contrasting sharply with protests this week calling for the removal of the Communist party.

The main evening news from China Central Television yesterday showed a hearse being driven through Shanghai, while people dressed in black - probably government employees - lined the streets and bowed their heads in silence. Authorities appeared to be confident that Jiang's death at 96 would not spark spontaneous public mourning just days after protests in Shanghai and other cities over coronavirus restrictions.

State funerals and the commemoration of dead Chinese leaders are highly controlled by the Communist party, which often cracks down on spontaneous commemorations among ordinary citizens.

On arrival at Beijing airport, Jiang's body - with his signature black-rimmed glasses - could be seen in a glass coffin that was carried out of a plane by 12 soldiers. Xi Jinping and other party leaders, all in black with a white flower on their lapels, bowed.

The authorities are wary of the kind of public mourning that broke out in April 1989 when Zhao's predecessor, Hu Yaobang, died. The mourning of the liberal leader in Tiananmen Square became a nationwide pro-democracy movement, which was brutally crushed.

Jiang's death was accorded the highest protocol, with state media referring to him as "a great Marxist and proletarian revolutionist, statesman, military strategist, diplomat, a proven communist fighter, an outstanding leader of socialism".



Mind over material

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Business

House prices fall at fastest pace since 2020 after mini-budget

Kalyeena Makortoff
Banking correspondent

UK house prices fell last month at their fastest rate for two and a half years as the fallout from Liz Truss's disastrous mini-budget put buyers off, according to Nationwide as it warned that inflation and rising interest rates would weigh on the market in the coming months.

The price of an average home dropped 1.4% to £263,788 in November, according to the building society's house price index, accelerating a slowdown that saw prices fall 0.9% in October. It was the third monthly decline in a row, and the biggest drop since June 2020. On an annual basis, annual house price growth slowed sharply to 4.4% in November, from 7.2% a month earlier.

The slowdown in November illustrated the lasting impact of September's mini-budget, which spooked markets and increased home loan costs. While government borrowing rates have eased since then, average five-year fixed mortgage deals are still hovering at about 5% and the resulting higher costs have continued to weigh on demand.

"While financial market conditions have stabilised, interest rates for new mortgages remain elevated and the market has lost a significant degree of momentum," Nationwide's chief economist, Robert Gardner, said. "Housing affordability for potential buyers and home movers has become much more stretched at a time when household finances are already under pressure from high inflation."

Nationwide said a larger proportion of people have been priced out of the market and have needed to borrow more money to buy a home.

Inflation hit 11.1% in October – its highest level since 1981 – which has reduced the spending capacity of UK households, including prospective homebuyers. The slowdown in house prices indicates the market has cooled relative to the strong growth observed during the pandemic, when in the "race for space" people sought larger homes and outside space after UK-wide lockdowns.

Nationwide warned yesterday that the housing market was unlikely to recover those losses anytime soon, as policymakers at Threadneedle Street ratchet up interest rates further in an attempt to combat climbing prices.

"The market looks set to remain subdued in the coming quarter," Gardner said. "Inflation is set to remain high for some time and [the] Bank rate is likely to rise further as the Bank of England seeks to ensure demand in the economy slows to relieve domestic price pressures."

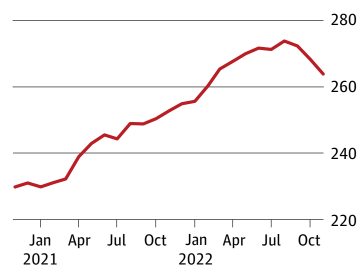
However, Gardner said homeowners were still in a relatively strong position, despite the oncoming recession and prospect of higher rates, given that about 85% of mortgages were on fixed-term home loans.

Experts from the EY Item Club said the savings many households built up during the pandemic would help to soften the blow of higher mortgage rates, but agreed further falls in house prices were likely.

While the independent forecaster claimed markets have overestimated the extent of forthcoming interest rate rises by the central bank, it still expects a 10% drop in average house prices over the next 18 months.

Martin Beck, its chief economic adviser, said: "The EY Item Club thinks [the] Bank rate will top out at no more than 4% early next year, compared with investors' current expectations of just under 5%."

UK house prices have fallen for the third month in a row
Average UK house price, £ thousands



Source: Nationwide

Next rescues Joules in a deal that will save 100 stores and 1,450 jobs

Sarah Butler

Next has teamed up with the founder of the collapsed fashion chain Joules to rescue it from administration in a £41m deal that will save about 100 shops and 1,450 jobs.

Sources said Next placed a last-minute bid early yesterday morning, trumping one placed by the South African Foschini Group, which owns Hobbs and Whistles. Marks & Spencer and Mike Ashley's Frasers Group are also thought to have taken an interest in Joules, which is best known for its jackets and patterned wellington boots.

Next said it intended to continue to operate about 100 Joules stores and retain the majority of jobs, including at head office, but 24 stores are to close with the loss of about 130 jobs. Administrators from Interpath Advisory will close 19 of those stores.

Joules's website will gradually be switched to Next's Total Platform operation, which provides services for brands including Gap and Victoria's Secret to which Next holds the UK rights.

Simon Wolfson, the chief executive of Next, said: "We are excited to see what can be achieved through the combination of Joules's exceptional product, marketing and brand-building skills with Next's Total Platform infrastructure."

Next said it had taken a 74% stake in Joules with the founder Tom Joule taking the remaining 26%, and had bought the majority of the retailer's assets including paying £7m for Joules's head office in Market Harborough, Leicestershire.

Joule said it was important the company now "live up to the high standards [its customers] desire in design, quality and [service].

"I'm truly looking forward to inspiring teams with clear direction to excite and recapture the imagination of the customer again," he said.

"I'm so pleased that we have been able to strike a deal that protects the future of the company for all its loyal customers, its employees and also for the town of Market Harborough."

Joules called in administrators last month, putting 1,600 jobs and the future of its 132 shops at risk, after failing to secure emergency funding.



▲ *Joules's colourful clothing will be sold online alongside brands such as Next, Gap and Victoria's Secret*
PHOTOGRAPH: JOULES

£41m
The value of the deal with Next, which made a last-minute bid for the fashion retailer yesterday



▲ *Oleg Ustenko, the chief economic adviser to the Ukrainian president*

Aide to Ukraine leader urges BP to cut ties with Russian oil firm Rosneft

Alex Lawson
Energy correspondent

The chief economic adviser to the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, has called on BP to exit Russia entirely after it was offered a £580m dividend by oil giant Rosneft.

Oleg Ustenko has written to BP's chief executive, Bernard Looney, to demand the British company cuts ties with the state-controlled Russian firm nine months after announcing its intention to leave the country.

BP has a 19.75% stake in Rosneft, one of the Kremlin's most important oil assets. The FTSE 100 company vowed to end its shareholding in February after Russia invaded Ukraine.

BP took a £18.7bn hit by writing off the shareholding from its books, but still owns the stock. Last month Rosneft's boss, Igor Sechin, said the British company should reconsider that position and that it had put aside a dividend, in a Russian account, for BP. In a letter to Looney, seen by the Guardian, Ustenko wrote: "BP was among the first of the oil majors to announce its intention to exit Russia by selling its stake in Rosneft, the Kremlin's oil company.

"Yet after nine months of Russian aggression, war crimes and the bombardment of civilian infrastructure, all funded and fuelled by Russian oil, gas and coal, BP remains a shareholder in Rosneft."

Ustenko added: "No accounting mechanisms or statements from BP will change this fact. This is blood money pure and simple."

BP has not issued an update on its efforts to sell the stake in Rosneft, which has brought in £3.75bn in dividends since 2013. It could prove hard to sell as the west has sanctions on Russia and uncertainty over the regulation of the Russian oil industry may deter suitors from other countries.

A BP spokesperson said: "Just three days after Russia's attack on Ukraine, BP announced we will exit our shareholding in Rosneft and other businesses in Russia … This is still our position."

Ofcom examines 'hidden' price rises of telecoms

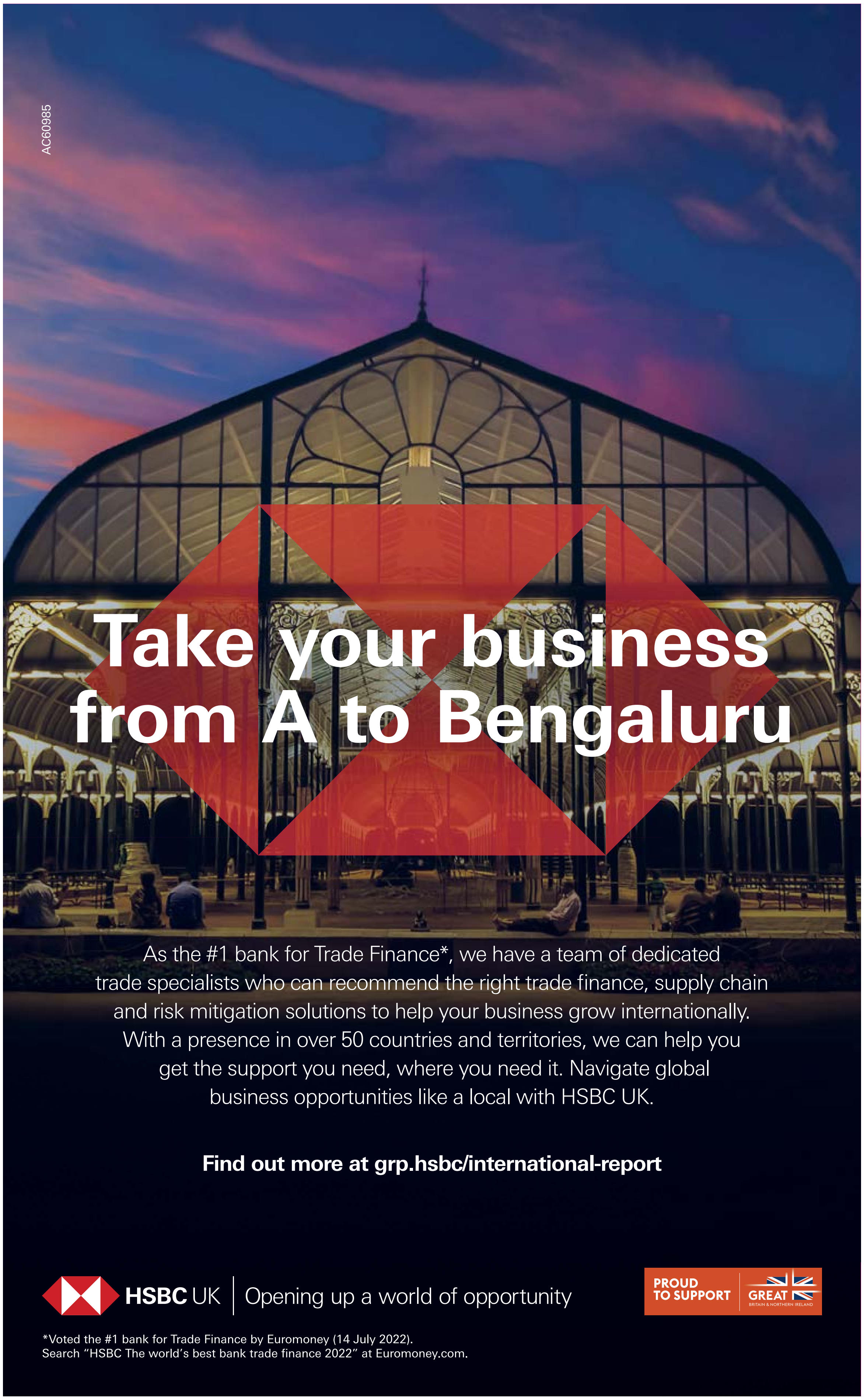
Mark Sweney

The telecoms regulator has begun an investigation into whether companies are ripping off mobile and broadband customers by not telling them, when they sign their contract, that they could face bill increases of hundreds of pounds.

Ofcom will investigate the sales practices in the UK telecoms market - which is dominated by BT, EE, Vodafone, Virgin Media, O2, Sky, Three, and TalkTalk - following complaints that customers are not told initially about mid-contract price rises.

Telecoms firms can make billions a year via price rises midway through contracts. Many raise prices annually by the inflation rate, as measured by the consumer prices index in January, plus 3.9%. With inflation at a 41-year high customers signing for a new two-year contract could pay up to £240 more than expected.

Ofcom said it was concerned that consumers who took out broadband and phone contracts between March 2021 and 16 June this year might "not have been provided with sufficiently clear information about in-contract price rises". It said its rules state potential future price rises have to be set out "prominently and transparently" at the time consumers sign up.



Business view
Nils Pratley



It's possible the housing market could land softly, but not yet - it's still got some falling to do

"The fallout from the mini-budget continued to impact the market," says Nationwide's chief economist, explaining the 1.4% decline in house prices in November.

There's never a wrong moment to kick Liz Truss and Kwasi Kwarteng's excursion into fantasy economics - and, yes, the shambles, and the spike in bond yields, will have been a factor. But let's not pretend the mini-budget is the sole cause of falling house values, or that declines will be halted by the subsequent U-turn.

The script was set when interest rates started rising 11 months ago, ending the long era of virtually free money. Look at Nationwide's pretty charts and you can see that the turn coincided with an unnaturally high peak in the price of houses expressed as a multiple of average earnings. At roughly seven times, the ratio was even higher than the 6.5 times seen in the frothy, pre-banking-crash days of 2007.

There are, then, many more months of "house prices fall" headlines for prospective first-time buyers to look forward to (or at least, those in work whose pay rises vaguely keep up with inflation). Key variables include how high mortgage rates go, and for how long, and what happens in the rest of the economy, including the impact of energy bills.

"A relatively soft landing is still possible," says Nationwide. For what it's worth, the Office for Budget Responsibility last month forecast a fall of 9% between the fourth quarter of this year and the third quarter of 2024. And the thinktank Capital Economics goes for a 12% slump, arguing that "affordability will have to improve substantially before demand can recover and prices bottom out". Precision is impossible, but you get the picture. Whatever the type of landing, it's some way off.

Next buy looks smart

Next's part-time role as a rehabilitation centre for ailing retail brands continues apace. Joules, which operates at the flowery wellies end of the fashion market, is being rescued from administration in a £34m deal in which Next takes a 74% stake and the chain's founder, Tom Joule, buys the rest. Next is also bagging the head office in Market Harborough - down the road from its own Leicester campus - for £7m.

Joules joins Next's collection of "partnership" brands that has grown quickly and quietly. The portfolio now includes Laura Ashley, Victoria's Secret, Reiss, Gap UK and JoJo Maman Bébé. In most cases, Next takes a majority stake and allows management to get on with the job. Its contribution is to plug the brands into the Next "total platform" of website, warehousing, marketing and logistics.

The economics of the model look smart. The fees paid by the partnership brands to access the platform may not be huge, but Next will get a proper win if the brands are revitalised via exposure on the UK's most-viewed fashion websites and their equity valuation grows.

It isn't guaranteed to succeed (though chances look reasonable with Joules), but the downside is limited while the upside is potentially substantial for the size of the investment. Other big retailers with warehouse capacity, including Marks & Spencer, are playing a similar game. Expect the trend to accelerate.

Asos fumbles bonus

It's a serious governance no-no to move the goalposts on an executive bonus scheme already under way. Asos, the online fashion firm, has a semi-excuse in that it is in crisis-fighting mode after a series of profit warnings. It needs to cut costs and staff and shed some of the excess stock written down by £100m in October's full-year numbers.

So one can see why the board has changed the weighting structure of chief executive José Antonio Ramos Calamonte's £1.05m bonus scheme. More emphasis has been placed on generating cash and less on turnover and profit targets.

But why didn't the remuneration committee make the change in October? Three months of the 12-month measurement period have now passed. And why did it bury the information in a notice on the corporate website this week? The directors have probably guaranteed a row at January's shareholder meeting. Fast fashion; slow-moving non-execs.

The script was set when interest rates started rising 11 months ago, ending the long era of virtually free money

▼ *Mortgage rates jumped after the mini-budget, but rising interest rates are only slowly reaching savings*
PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS RATCLIFFE/GETTY



Heads they win, tails we lose

Are big banks short-changing customers on loans and savings?

Rupert Jones

Big high street banks stand accused of failing to pass on to customers the recent movements in the money markets that should have improved mortgage and savings rates.

Some lenders are offering fixed-rate mortgage deals 50%-60% more expensive than those they were selling just three months ago - even though money market "swap rates" that largely determine the pricing of new fixed deals have fallen sharply since the highs that followed Kwasi Kwarteng's disastrous mini-budget in September.

Meanwhile, it is claimed others are short-changing savers with "abysmal" interest returns after data showed many had only passed on a tiny proportion of the st ring of hikes in the Bank of England base rate.

So what is going on in each case and are accusations of profiteering justified?

Mortgages

The price of new fixed-rate mortgages had been rising, but really shot up after Kwarteng's now mostly ditched mini-budget unleashed chaos in the financial markets. The average new two-year fix surged from 4.74% on 23 September, the day of the statement, to 6.65% by 20 October.

The two-year swap rates that are one of the main drivers of pricing fixed deals also jumped - from about 3.85% in early September to 5.67% on 29 September - but have since fallen sharply to 4.24% as of yesterday. However, average rates on new fixed-rate mortgages have only nudged down a little in the same period: the typical new two-year deal is priced just above 6%.

Some of Britain's biggest banks are offering deals that are significantly more expensive than their equivalents at the start of September. According to the data provider Moneyfacts, NatWest was last week offering people looking to remortgage who had a 40% deposit a two-year fix of 6.2% with no product fee. The equivalent at the start of September was 3.79%. Similarly, Lloyds Bank was offering homebuyers seeking the same deal 6.39%, whereas on 1 September the figure was 3.91%, Moneyfacts said.



◀ *A shopper looks at houses in an estate agent's window. With many rates still above 6%, some buyers may want to hold on*

Mortgage experts indicated it usually took between two and five weeks for lenders to reprice their fixed rates after money market movements. But with all the recent volatility, they have been slower to act, in part because of concerns about taking on more business than they can manage.

Rachel Springall, a finance expert at Moneyfacts, said: "We are seeing cuts to fixed rates. In the next few weeks, I would imagine we would continue that trajectory … It was only last week that the average five-year fixed rate dropped below 6%. That took seven weeks."

Nick Mendes at the mortgage broker John Charcol said lenders were making "gradual" changes to fixed-rate mortgage pricing, adding the market was "delicate" and banks were keen to maintain service levels. He predicted "a gradual decrease" in fixed rates from now until early next year.

Moneyfacts said borrowers "may feel they have to be patient for a little while longer, or even wait until next year to see how the market recovers from the recent interest rate uncertainty".

Savings

Savings rates are on the rise, with some accounts paying as much as 5% - but many of the best offers are from challenger banks and smaller or less well-known providers. Savers with money in some of the UK's most widely held accounts have so far seen very little benefit from the eight Bank of England rises since December last year, which have pushed up the base rate from 0.1% to 3% today. When it comes to easy access accounts - many high street banks were this week paying as little as 0.2%.

> *'Why are banks behaving this way? Because they can. Sadly, people don't shop around'*
>
> **Simon Jones**
> *InvestingReviews.co.uk*

According to Moneyfacts, the Barclays Everyday Saver account was paying 0.01% on 15 December last year. However, by the start of this week that had only risen to 0.25% on balances under £100,000. Yesterday it increased to 0.5% for all balances.

Santander's Everyday Saver account had a rate of 0.01% last December, and was this week paying 0.2%. This will rise to 0.4% from tomorrow. Halifax's Everyday Saver account was paying 0.01% last December, rising to 0.45% on Monday and 0.55% on Tuesday. A number of similar accounts from other major high street players are paying 0.5% or less.

"Interest on cash savings remains abysmal, and surprise, surprise, it's the biggest high street banks that are short-changing their customers the most," said Simon Jones, of the financial comparison site InvestingReviews.co.uk. He added that banks were often quick "to ping their borrowers news of an increase in borrowing costs … but they are usually far less anxious about passing on the same hike to their savers. People ask, 'Why are they behaving this way?' and the answer is very simple. Because they can. Sadly, when it comes to banking, people don't shop around as much as they should."

Springall at Moneyfacts said: "Base rate was 0.1% at the start of December, so an easy access account would need to pay at least 3% now to have improved by the full Bank base rate rise since then."

Barclays said it regularly reviewed its savings rates, and in September launched Rainy Day Saver, an account paying 5%.

Santander said: "We will be increasing the rates on our Everyday Saver, Instant Saver, Isa Saver and Easy Isa accounts to 0.4% from 2 December … We frequently review our savings rates to ensure we're providing savers with a choice of products to help them achieve their savings goals."

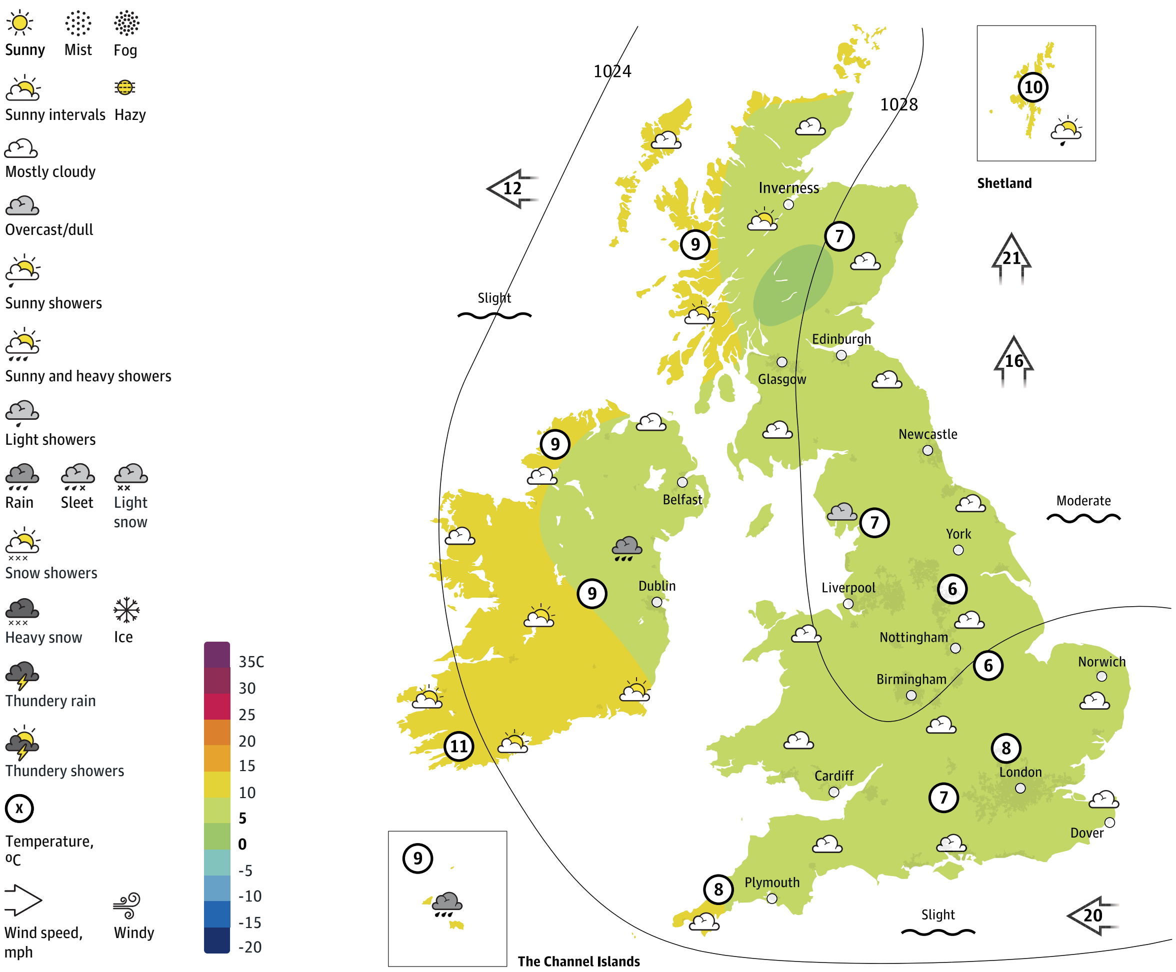
Halifax said its "savings product pricing is complex and dynamic", adding: "This year we increased savings rates in April, June and again in September and (on 29 November) we increased the interest rate paid on all our variable rate savings products by up to 1%."

3%

Interest rate an easy access account should be paying to have improved by the full Bank base rate rise

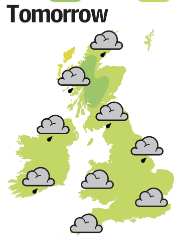
Weather
Friday 2 December 2022

UK and Ireland Noon today

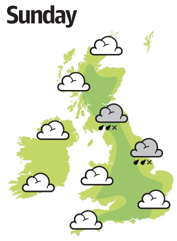


Forecast

Low 1 High 6
Tomorrow



Low 2 High 6
Sunday



Carbon count

Daily atmospheric CO_2 readings from Mauna Loa, Hawaii (ppm):

Latest	
28 Nov 2022	417.31
Weekly average	
20 Nov 2022	418.53
01 Dec 2021	415.33
01 Dec 2012	393.31
Pre-industrial base	*280*
Safe level	*350*

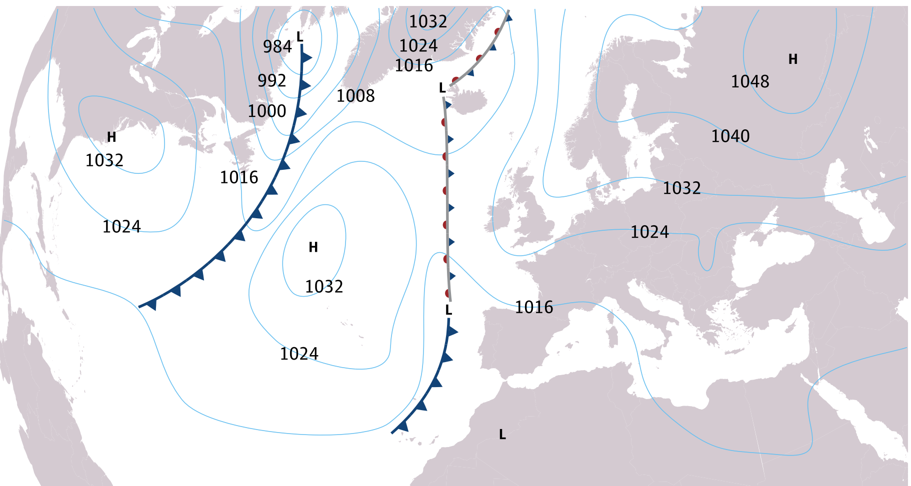
Source: NOAA-ESRL

Around the UK

	Low	High	Precipitation	Air pollution
London	4	8	25%	Low
Manchester	2	6	25%	Low
Edinburgh	4	8	25%	Low
Belfast	4	9	10%	Low
Birmingham	1	6	25%	Low
Brighton	4	8	25%	Low
Bristol	2	6	25%	Low
Cardiff	3	6	25%	Low
Newcastle	2	6	25%	Low
Penzance	4	10	40%	Low

Lows and highs

Atlantic front



Cold front

Warm front

Occluded front

Trough

High tides

Source: © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Times are local UK times

Aberdeen	0852	3.7m	2053	3.8m
Avonmouth	0148	10.4m	1425	10.9m
Barrow	0623	7.6m	1848	8.1m
Belfast	0617	3.1m	1831	3.3m
Cobh	--	--	1240	3.6m
Cromer	0104	4.4m	1419	4.2m
Dover	0555	5.8m	1856	5.7m
Dublin	0658	3.6m	1903	3.8m
Galway	0010	4.2m	1231	4.3m
Greenock	0727	3.0m	1938	3.2m
Harwich	0618	3.4m	1906	3.6m
Holyhead	0541	4.7m	1749	5.1m
Hull	0035	6.4m	1348	6.3m
Leith	0952	4.8m	2210	4.9m
Liverpool	0609	7.8m	1832	8.3m
London Bridge	0824	6.0m	2107	6.4m
Lossiemouth	0652	3.5m	1853	3.6m
Milford Haven	0056	5.6m	1329	6.0m
Newquay	--	--	1228	6.0m
North Shields	1056	4.3m	2301	4.5m
Oban	0111	2.9m	1343	3.4m
Penzance	--	--	1157	4.8m
Plymouth	0030	4.5m	1254	4.8m
Portsmouth	0642	4.3m	1856	4.1m
Southport	0510	7.5m	1733	8.0m
Stornoway	0225	3.9m	1431	4.3m
Weymouth	0153	0.6m	1408	0.7m
Whitby	1127	4.7m	2334	4.9m
Wick	0636	3.0m	1834	3.2m
Workington	0635	6.8m	1857	7.3m

Sun & Moon



Sun rises	0744
Sun sets	1554
Moon rises	1343
Moon sets	0052
Full Moon	8 Dec

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather** ©2022

Lighting up

Belfast	1603 to 0827
Birm'ham	1556 to 0757
Brighton	1557 to 0743
Bristol	1605 to 0756
Carlisle	1547 to 0815
Cork	1626 to 0821
Dublin	1610 to 0820
Glasgow	1548 to 0827
Harlech	1604 to 0809
Inverness	1536 to 0836
London	1554 to 0746
M'chester	1554 to 0804
Newcastle	1542 to 0811
Norwich	1543 to 0746
Penzance	1622 to 0802

Pollutionwatch

Seventy years ago London was brought to a halt as a thick smog blanketed the city.

It is difficult to imagine how it must have felt to be indoors with fog pressed against the windows. People who ventured outside could not see their own feet and many got lost in their own neighbourhoods.

The smog began on 5 December 1952, a Friday. Weekend football was cancelled because players could not see across the pitch. Theatres closed as the smog crept inside and audiences could no longer see the stage. Hundreds of people became ill.

Ambulances crawled around the city taking people to hospital. Many patients died within a few hours. Others went home and died in their sleep. By Monday morning, the mortuaries were full. The smog lasted for nearly a week and led to the deaths of about 12,000 Londoners, a disaster greater than the worst cholera outbreaks of the 1800s.

Inaction on air pollution cost lives then and it does now. It took four years for a reluctant government to pass the Clean Air Act of 1956 and, as a consequence, several thousand Londoners died in smogs through the 1950s and early 1960s. **Gary Fuller** *@drgaryfuller*

Around the world

Algiers	18	Lisbon	15
Ams'dam	3	Madrid	9
Athens	17	Malaga	17
Auckland	20	Melb'rne	22
B Aires	25	Mexico C	23
Bangkok	32	Miami	27
Barcelona	13	Milan	7
Basra	26	Mombasa	31
Beijing	0	Moscow	-7
Berlin	2	Mumbai	32
Bermuda	20	N Orleans	22
Brussels	2	Nairobi	25
Budapest	3	New Delhi	25
C'hagen	4	New York	8
Cairo	23	Oslo	0
Cape Town	21	Paris	5
Chicago	10	Perth	23
Corfu	17	Prague	0
Dakar	27	Reykjavik	5
Dhaka	30	Rio de J	30
Dublin	9	Rome	15
Florence	11	Shanghai	10
Gibraltar	15	Singapore	29
H Kong	19	Stockh'm	0
Harare	27	Strasb'g	5
Helsinki	-2	Sydney	21
Istanbul	13	Tel Aviv	22
Jo'burg	28	Tenerife	22
K Lumpur	30	Tokyo	12
K'mandu	23	Toronto	7
Kabul	13	Vancouv'r	2
Kingston	31	Vienna	2
Kolkata	29	Warsaw	-1
L Angeles	16	Wash'ton	11
Lagos	30	Well'ton	15
Lima	22	Zurich	4

Football

Ambitious Rice outlines desire to leave West Ham

Page 43 →

Indycar

Jamie Chadwick joins Andretti in latest F1 drive

Page 39 →



Sport



World Cup 2022

▲ *Jordan Henderson gave Jude Bellingham greater freedom to roam against Wales*
ALEX PANTLING/GETTY

Style and substance

Southgate's options in midfield give England plenty of room to manoeuvre



Karen Carney

We may have got a glimpse of Gareth Southgate's tactics for the knockout stages in the win over Wales on Tuesday. The England head coach changed the central midfield three, removing the attacking role behind Harry Kane to bring in the experienced Jordan Henderson in a deeper position.

England will have seen what other teams are doing and how they operate, leaving Southgate to create a plan that could take England through to the final. Brazil, for example, go through the middle of teams and an extra man in central midfield will help counteract that. It worked against Wales, who managed a solitary shot.

England's first - but hopefully not last - opponents in the knockout stages are Senegal, who have serious midfield concerns. Cheikhou Kouyaté was injured in the first match and Idrissa Gueye picked up a second booking against Ecuador, meaning he will be suspended. Having to reshuffle for a vital game will be a tough ask for them.

Midfield is an area where England are strong. Jude Bellingham has arguably been their best player across the opening three games and Declan Rice has worked diligently. Having a third deeper central player is not necessarily a defensive move because Bellingham has proved he is a threat going forward and Rice and Henderson allow him greater freedom to attack in the space previously occupied by Mason Mount. Adding Henderson in place of a more attacking midfielder brings a level of robustness that should allow England to cope with technical and physical opponents.

Kyle Walker can help protect the areas in front of the defence from right-back - it is something he does a lot at Manchester City - but he has played only an hour in the tournament, so the balance of three deeper central midfielders makes sense. Kalvin Phillips could drop into the central three and his time against Wales will be useful.

Another change was the use of Phil Foden and Marcus Rashford from the start. In the first half they played as inverted wingers - Foden on the right and Rashford the left. The Manchester United forward was one of England's more impressive players but Foden struggled to get into the game. Wales did well to double up on the Manchester City midfielder and when he cut inside it was into a congested area.

Southgate swapped the two over for the second half, making an immediate impact thanks to Foden's clever dribbling to earn a free-kick from which Rashford scored. They looked more comfortable on their stronger sides. Rashford became more direct and Foden seemed liberated. The greater freedom helped him make a trademark, Pep Guardiola-inspired run to the back post to tap home the second.

The third goal came from Rashford, a sign of his returning confidence, when he cut inside and showed smart feet before finishing. No one should doubt his ability. When young players come on to the scene they are quite raw and just go for it, but the next stage, when they are about 21 and people imagine they have 50 caps and are more experienced than they are, is really hard. They have to get through that. Rashford has come out the other side and is showing what he is capable of. It is a case of believing in yourself and he has the self-confidence required at the top, allowing United and England to reap the rewards this season.

It will be difficult for Southgate to leave out Foden or Rashford. The only question is whether Foden can get in the game enough to affect it. I liked what he brought, trying to take people on, being brave and attempting to open up the opposition. The performance should help him to stay in the team.

It will be difficult to leave out Foden or Rashford. The only question is whether Foden can affect the game

Before the tournament the only concern I had about England was the defence. In three games they have conceded twice, which is largely down to how well they have controlled the matches. England have kept the ball well and that makes a team more defensively sound because the opposition cannot threaten without possession.

England have not lost in their 20 matches against African opposition, which is an impressive record. There have already been shocks in the tournament and the important thing is for England to maintain their focus. Kalidou Koulibaly scored Senegal's winner after a free-kick was crossed into the box against Ecuador, a sign of how dangerous he is.

England will be favourites but they should not have one eye on the quarter-final because they will be punished. I have played in tournaments where we were tipped to win, lost concentration, conceded two goals from set pieces and were on the next plane home.

Senegal have lost some key players: not only Gueye and Kouyaté but also Sadio Mané before the World Cup began. Selfishly, as an England fan, this is good news because they will be very hard to replace. Senegal do, though, have plenty of quality. We have seen at Watford how dangerous Ismaïla Sarr is and he proved that by winning and scoring a penalty against Ecuador.

England have the tools to beat Senegal but now it is a case of getting the job done and nothing comes easy at a World Cup.

Crawley leads way as England fly out traps with four centuries

Duckett, Pope and Brook also plunder hundreds on breathtaking opening day

Ali Martin
Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium

After all the sickness bug drama of the previous day, England did not so much head for the traps as positively fly out of them. Their first day of Test cricket in Pakistan for 17 years had the digits on the scoreboard in Rawalpindi spinning like the wheels on a fruit machine, the cherries appearing on the middle of English willow as a succession of records tumbled.

At the close, as the woozy winter sun made its final descent, the tourists had made a quite remarkable 506 for four from 75 overs and all those wondering how their new approach would fare on its first overseas assignment had an answer. Four centurions in a day for the first time – Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope and Harry Book – and all but one, Duckett, quicker than a run a ball. Their appetite was clearly unaffected.

Crawley's 86-ball century en route to 122 from 111 was the fastest by an English Test opener, Graham Gooch's 95-ball effort against India in 1993 surpassed. He and Duckett, 107 from 110 on his comeback, combined for England's most bountiful opening session, reaching lunch 174 for no loss from 27 overs. The previous record, 169 for none at Trent Bridge in 1938, came from 42 overs, which sounds rather pedestrian by comparison.

But the feat that stood out most was collective, Pope's 108 from 104 balls and Brook's unbeaten 101 from 81 helping England eclipse Australia's 494 for six against South Africa at Sydney in 1910-11 for the highest opening-day Test total of all time. Ben Stokes sealed it, heaving newcomer Mohammad Ali for six in an 18-run final over to walk off with 34 from 15.

This was a handy toss for Stokes to win, no question, and not simply because of the chino-beige road in front of him. Batting first allowed those still recovering from the virus outbreak extra time with their feet up, with only the stricken Ben Foakes missing out from the original XI as the wicketkeeping gloves were passed to the more part-time Pope.

But even considering the benign surface, only briefly transcended by Haris Rauf when he uprooted Crawley's off stump after lunch with a beautiful reverse-swinging howitzer, this was some statement. It wasn't slogging either, the first six of the day coming on the stroke of tea when Brook rocked back and muscled the leg-spinner Zahid Mahmood over midwicket.

Instead it was a display of controlled, positive strokeplay and some inventive sweeps – orthodox and reverse – from Duckett and Pope. England scored 73 fours on a lightning outfield, earning appreciative applause from an 8,000-strong crowd that had come from the bustle of Murree Road and passed the countless security checks en route.

No Foakes meant Will Jacks joining Liam Livingstone in making his Test debut but the newcomers were able to fondle their box-fresh blue caps all day. Crawley and Duckett amassed 233 for the first wicket inside 36 overs, their initial century opening stand taking 13.5 overs to become the speediest in England's history. The previous best came during the new era, too, Crawley and Alex Lees needing 17.2 overs against South Africa at the Oval in September.

It was clear from the outset Crawley was comfortable, picking off 14 runs from Naseem Shah's opening over and enjoying some short-arm pulls off Rauf. Indeed, bar one leg-break from Zahid that beat the outside edge, it was not until the right-hander was on 99 after lunch that his first heart-in-mouth moment came. Struck in front by Naseem and given out on the field, the review showed it was missing leg by a whisker.

Three balls later, Crawley was celebrating his third Test century, drilling Naseem through extra cover for his 19th four. Up in the England dressing room, as teammates rose as one in appreciation, the Rolling Stones were blasting out of Brendon McCullum's hi-fi. Satisfaction? Yes, not least for an opener who spent most of the summer under the microscope.

At the other end Duckett also shrugged off the beast of burden that comes with opening for England, his first Test innings in six years delivering a maiden century as he pulled Haris square. It was a knock full of inventive manipulation and meaty cuts, the type Stokes was clearly expecting when he dubbed the diminutive left-hander "a captain's nightmare".

The afternoon was the most sedate, a mere 158 raided, and three wickets fell. After Haris delighted his hometown crowd with the wicket of Crawley – the 36-over old Kookaburra ball fleetingly moving sideways – the largely plundered Zahid trapped Duckett and Joe Root (23) lbw on the sweep. Root was at the recent Abu Dhabi Grand Prix and told Martin Brundle he wouldn't mind batting on the track; he will have been fuming to miss out on the next-best thing.

Instead, from 286 for three in 46 overs, it was Pope and Brook who upped the ante after tea, trowelling 174 runs on to the total. Pope was princely and compact in compiling his third Test century from 90 balls, while Brook ensured Jonny Bairstow's absence wasn't felt. The Yorkshireman's dash to an 80-ball maiden century – England's third quickest – even featured six fours off an over of Saud Shakeel's part-time spin as the Pakistan captain Babar Azam searched for answers.

Pakistan's bowling figures were in flames by the close. Zahid had leaked 160 runs from 23 overs, while his fellow debutant Ali – the thriftiest – had largely stung like a butterfly until he finally jagged one into Pope's pads. Every day of this historic Test match will be shortened by bad light but, like Withnail haring down the motorway from Penrith, England are making time.

Day one scoreboard

Rawalpindi England lead Pakistan by 506 runs with six first-innings wickets remaining.

England First innings		Balls	4s	6s
Z Crawley b Haris Rauf	**122**	111	21	0
BM Duckett lbw b Mahmood	**107**	110	15	0
†OJD Pope lbw b M Ali	**108**	104	14	0
JE Root lbw b Mahmood	**23**	31	3	0
HC Brook not out	**101**	81	14	2
***BA Stokes** not out	**34**	15	6	1
Extras (b2, lb6, w1, nb2)	**11**			
Total (for 4, 75 overs)	**506**			

Fall 233, 235, 286, 462.

To bat WG Jacks, LS Livingstone, MJ Leach, OE Robinson, JM Anderson.

Bowling Naseem Shah 15-0-96-0; Mohammad Ali 17-1-96-1; Haris Rauf 13-1-78-1; Zahid Mahmood 23-1-160-2; Agha Salman 5-0-38-0; Saud Shakeel 2-0-30-0.

Pakistan Abdullah Shafique, Imam-ul-Haq, Azhar Ali, *Babar Azam, Saud Shakeel, †Mohammad Rizwan, Agha Salman, Naseem Shah, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Ali, Zahid Mahmood.

Toss England elected to bat.

Umpires Ahsan Raza (Pak) and JS Wilson (WI).



Opening pair spark incredible run spree

Zak Crawley and Ben Duckett (right) were in superb form on a day England amassed 76 boundaries

AAMIR QURESHI/AFP VIA GETTY

Rawalpindi record-breakers England's remarkable day in numbers

● England's 506 for four is the *highest total of all time on the opening day* of a Test, eclipsing the 494 for six scored by Australia against South Africa at Sydney in 1910-11.

● Harry Brook scored England's *third-fastest Test century* (80 balls). Zak Crawley scored the seventh-fastest (86 balls) and the fastest by an England opener.

● Crawley and Ben Duckett's century stand came off 83 balls and was the *quickest in England history*, beating the record set by Alex Lees and Crawley in September.

● Crawley and Duckett put on the *fastest opening stand* of 200 in Test history. The partnership of 233 was England's highest since Andrew Strauss (📷) and Marcus Trescothick put on 273 in Durban in 2004.



● It was the third time England have had four centurions in a Test innings, the second time they have had four centurions on a single day and the first time they have had four centurions on the first day of a Test. Indeed, it is the *first time anyone has had four centurions* on the first day of a Test.

● The 174 runs in the opening session of the first day was *an England record*, and the second most in Test history.

Chadwick takes Indy NXT route in her drive towards Formula One

Giles Richards

Jamie Chadwick has never shied away from bold moves on track and is showing similar nerve as she steps up to a new challenge in the new world. In pursuing her ambition of making it to Formula One, the British driver will race for the Andretti team in the US Indy NXT championship in 2023, a vital return to racing against men and a chance to prove her abilities on a hugely competitive stage.

The 24-year-old, who has won all three of the all-female W Series championships, will test herself next year in the IndyCar feeder series formerly known as Indy Lights, once more against a mixed field. She acknowledges how beneficial the women-only series has been for her career but going up against the men again is a task she cannot wait to embrace as the first woman in Indy NXT for 13 years.

"Going back into mixed competition the talent pool is much greater so the level will naturally be higher," she says. "Putting myself up against some of the best drivers in the world is what I want to be doing, that's where I want to see how I fare. Before the W Series that's what I was doing, everything I was competing in was mixed, it's what I grew up doing and to be back in that environment is something I am looking forward to."

The drive with Andretti, confirmed yesterday, is a major achievement for Chadwick, doubly so in that it has been financially backed by DHL, a major step in furthering her career. She had hoped to move into the F1 feeder series F3 but only wanted to do so with a competitive team – in Indy with Andretti she has exactly that platform. The outfit, run by Michael Andretti, the son of former F1 world champion, Mario, has superb pedigree, with five Indy 500 victories, four IndyCar championships and five Indy Lights titles.

The winner of the Indy NXT title is guaranteed a drive in three IndyCar races including the Indy 500 but doing so will be hard earned. Chadwick will be driving a heavier, more powerful and more physical car for longer races than those in which she has previously competed. She must learn new tracks and come to terms with the unique challenge of racing on ovals.

Yet she is confident she can step up physically, a crucial factor in potentially returning to the F1 feeder series F3 and F2, and is targeting top five

> ***'Putting myself up against the best in the world is what I want to be doing'***
>
> **Jamie Chadwick**

finishes next season. "Whatever the route ends up being, the ultimate goal is F1, however that route is taken," she says. "If I am having success that route can still be taken. The key thing now is development, getting as much seat time and preparation so whatever comes the year after, Europe or the States, I am in a much better position for."

While F1 has not had a female driver compete in a grand prix since Lella Lombardi raced in Austria in 1976, IndyCar has had eight women drive in the championship since 2000. Chadwick has recognised that the best opportunity for her was in the US rather than pursuing an uncompetitive drive in F3 which is also prohibitively expensive.

"I have followed the racing in the US a lot over the last few years," she says. "I went to the 500 in 2019 and I had a new-found respect and interest in IndyCar especially. There are a lot of opportunities in the States for a lot of drivers and for female drivers it seems to be a proven pathway, a lot of female drivers have had success over there."

She happily concedes she has been a beneficiary of the W Series, a championship she has dominated since its first season in 2019, and that it was crucial in helping her secure the drive with Andretti. However, this year the series was forced to cancel its final three races because of financial problems. It also faces an uncertain future with F1 having announced its own all-female feeder series – the F1 Academy – for 2023.

Chadwick may be leaving the W Series behind but firmly defended its unique financial model which pays for all of the competitors' costs.

"The series exists because they are fully funding all the drivers, there is no other motor sport championship that does anything like that," she says. "In that sense the business model is different and hasn't necessarily worked in this instance but I don't think it should change. They just need more support to continue with that philosophy because it is changing careers. It has inspired a whole new generation of drivers, also female mechanics and engineers whom I have seen progress into F1 off the back of the W Series, so it has been a success."





◀ *The triple W Series champion Jamie Chadwick (pictured below testing her Indy car) sees racing in the US as the next step*
CLIVE ROSE/ GETTY IMAGES

Results

Cricket

FIRST TEST (second day of five)

Australia v West Indies

Perth

Australia First innings (overnight 293-2)

M Labuschagne c Da Silva b Brathwaite	**204**
SPD Smith not out	**200**
TM Head b Brathwaite	**99**
Extras (b13, lb2, w5, nb5)	**25**
Total (for 4 dec, 152.4 overs)	**598**

Fall cont 402, 589.

Did not bat CJ Green, †AT Carey, *PJ Cummins, MA Starc, NM Lyon, JR Hazlewood.

Bowling Roach 26-3-91-0; Seales 21-3-95-1; Joseph 24-4-83-0; Mayers 15-2-39-1; Holder 23-6-70-0; Chase 31-2-140-0; Brathwaite 12.4-0-65-2.

West Indies First innings

***KC Brathwaite** not out	**18**
T Chanderpaul not out	**47**
Extras (lb7, nb2)	**9**
Total (for 0, 25 overs)	**74**

To bat NE Bonner, J Blackwood, KR Mayers, JO Holder, †J Da Silva, R L Chase, AS Joseph, KAJ Roach, J N T Seales.

Bowling Starc-7-2-15-0; Hazlewood-8-1-31-0; Cummins-6-1-15-0; Lyon-4-1-6-0.

Toss Australia elected to bat.

Umpires RK Illingworth (Eng) and RJ Tucker (Aus).

Golf

SOUTH AFRICAN OPEN (Johannesburg)
Leading first-round scores (SA unless stated)
64 T Lawrence. **65** R Fisher (Eng); J Fahrbring (Swe). **66** S Jamieson (Sco); M Schmid (Ger); JJ Senekal. **67** W Nienaber; L Brown; A Michael; E Molinari (It); S Tarrio (Sp); T McKibbin (NI). **68** D Bradbury (Eng); C Schwartzel; M Gradecki (Pol); D Fichardt; T Aiken; J Schaper; M Warren (Sco); A Cockerill (Can); J Dantorp (Swe); K Krogh Johannessen (Nor); C Sordet (Fr); C Bring (Den). **69** K de Beer; C Maas; R Sterne; Z Lombard; C Hanna (US); D Gavins (Eng); N Kimsey (Eng); J Freiburghaus (Swi); J Ko (Fr); D Germishuys; S Hutsby (Eng); G Hurley (Ire); M Siem (Ger). **70** A Otaegui (Sp); D Burmester; D Frittelli; B Easton; T Strydom; A Haindl; J Prinsloo; P Moolman; M Rohwer; J Hugo; H Du Plessis; O Strydom; J du Preez; J Kruyswijk; L Jerling; T Pulkkanen (Fin); M Lindberg (Swe); F Schott (Ger); N Bachem (Ger); L Filippi; R Paratore (It); M Spacey; T Thimba Jr.. **71** S Crocker (US); Wu A (Chn); MJ Daffue; J Broomhead; A Potgieter; B Grace; G Coetzee; C Smit; A Venter; M Viljoen; W Dingle; M Bremner; R van der Spuy; O Bekker; K Davidse; CJ Du Plessis; M Palmer; R Langasque (Fr); M Southgate (Eng); J Walters; R Sciot-Siegrist (Fr); S Forsstroem (Swe); D Ravetto (Fr); D Brown (Eng); F Laporta (It); G Stal (Fr); M Mitchell; M Nethunzwi. **72** S Valimaki (Fin); Y Premlall; B Stone; J Strydom; R Enoch (Wal); D Whitnell (Eng); J Morrison (Eng); J Luiten (Neth); A Knappe (Ger); T Clements (Eng); A Del Rey (Spa); G Kristjansson (Isl); J Hess. **73** J Campillo (Sp); S Norris; H Bruiners; JC Ritchie; J Ahlers; L Rowe; H Otto; E van Rooyen; R Kaminski; L Albertse; L Nemecz (Aut); A Hidalgo (Sp); G Forrest (Sco); L de Jager; M Leth Simonsen (Den); M Baldwin (Eng); B Bailey (US); K Africa; A Breen; J Redman; J van der Merwe; A Saddier (Fr); A Williamson; C Mowat

AUSTRALIAN OPEN (Melbourne)
Leading first-round scores (Aus unless stated)
63 D Micheluzzi. **66** M Griffin. **68** J Geary (NZ). **67** N Højgaard (Den); C McKinney; Z Garcia; P Pineau (Fr). **69** H Barron; G Wiebe (US). **68** H Endycott; D Ieremia (NZ); N Voke (NZ); P Cooke; L Higgins; V Meyer (Ger); T Lewis (Eng); C Purcell (Ire). **70** C Percy; K Okada (Jpn); L Herbert; P Lonard; R Hisatsune (Jpn). **69** D Bling (US); D Lawson; T Sinnott; C Wood; E Smylie; T Kanaya (Jpn); L Johnston (Sco). **71** G Chalmers; A Scott; W Ormsby. **70** M Jones; M Lee; M Fraser; J Zunic; J Armstrong; S Arnold; M Leishman; A Wilkin; T Power-Horan; P Sagoo (Eng); A Canizares (Sp); T Pilkadaris; J Murdoch. **72** B Coletta; Ding W (Chn); J Morgan; J Lyras; B Collyer; M Millar; N Flanagan; S Wools-Cobb; G Ogilvy; C Crawford; D Klein; J Munro; K Bittle; J Scrivener; D Howell (Eng); J Hughes. **71** L Toomey (NZ); C Smith; Z Murray; D Ackerman (US); D Loypur; P O'Malley; C Dann; J Norris; J Parry (Eng); D Horsey (Eng). **73** H Hopewell; D Bransdon; C Davis; J Felton; D Papadatos; J Thompson; A Martin; B Wharton; B Eccles; J Warren; M Sim; L Flynn; J Bugdalski; K Reitan (Nor). **72** R HOjgaard (Den); L Barker; A Bautista; B Windred; L Dobbelaar; M Hendry (NZ); H Bateman; J Mullaney; S Jeffress; R Chisnall (NZ); L Brown (NZ).

Snooker

BETVICTOR SCOTTISH OPEN (Edinburgh)
Second round: J Jones (Wal) bt J Higgins (Sco) 4-3; **J Lisowski** (Eng) bt A Carter (Eng) 4-3; **Xiao G** (Chn) bt Tian P (Chn) 4-2; **T Un-Nooh** (Tha) bt M Allen (NI) 4-1; **K Wilson** (Eng) bt S Maguire (Sco) 4-2; **H Vafaei** (Irn) bt Yan B (Chn) 4-3; **R Walden** (Eng) bt R Day (Wal) 4-0; **S Craigie** (Eng) bt Zhang A (Chn) 4-2

Basketball

NBA
Cleveland 113 Philadelphia 85; Orlando 108 Atlanta 125; Boston 134 Miami 121; NY Knicks 103 Milwaukee 109; Brooklyn 113 Washington 107; Oklahoma City 119 San Antonio 111; Minnesota 109 Memphis 101; New Orleans 126 Toronto 108; Utah 125 LA Clippers 112; Phoenix 132 Chicago 113; Denver 120 Houston 100; Sacramento 137 Indiana 114; LA Lakers 128 Portland 109

Greg Wood's racing tips

Sedgefield
12.00 Piecederesistance **12.30** Betty Baloo
1.00 Monjules **1.35** Kildrum **2.10** Jet Smart **2.45** Mister Bells (nap) **3.20** Judicial Review

Exeter
12.15 Gelino Bello **12.50** Isle Of Aron **1.25** Blenkinsop
2.00 Lallygag **2.35** Shakem Up'Arry **3.10** Favori De Sivola **3.45** Take No Chances

Sandown
12.40 Valsheda **1.10** Kansas Du Berlais **1.45** Gloire D'Athon **2.20** Maximilian **2.55** Rose Sea Has
3.30 Hugos New Horse

Newcastle
3.03 Mrs Dibble **3.38** Project Black **4.10** Mistamac
4.45 Zip **5.15** Walking On Clouds **5.45** Logo Hunter
6.15 Embour **6.45** After John **7.15** Blazing Son (nb)

Fixtures

Football (7.45pm unless stated)
Sky Bet League One
Bolton v Bristol Rovers; Charlton v Cheltenham; Ipswich v Fleetwood Town; Morecambe v Exeter; Peterborough v Barnsley; Plymouth v Port Vale
Sky Bet League Two
Crewe v Newport; Doncaster v Walsall; Stevenage v Barrow

Rugby union
Gallagher Premiership
Bath v Harlequins (7.45pm)
United Championship
Sharks v Ospreys (5.10pm); Edinburgh v Munster (7.45pm)

Cricket First Women's Twenty20 International
New Zealand v Bangladesh, Christchurch (6am)

Sport In brief

Cycling

Olympics forces Nice ending to Tour in 2024

The Tour de France will finish in Nice rather than Paris in the summer of 2024. The race will finish in the south of France rather than Paris for the first time on 21 July as the capital builds up to hosting the Olympics a few days later. The final stage will also be an individual time trial rather than the usual ceremonial outing for the leaders, meaning the race could be decided at the death. It is the first time Le Tour has concluded with a time trial since 1989, when Greg LeMond pipped Laurent Fignon by eight seconds, the closest finish in the race's history. **PA Media**

Cricket

Smith's 200no puts him level with Bradman

Steve Smith joined Don Bradman on 29 Test centuries with a double ton as Australia took control of the first Test against West Indies on day two in Perth. Marnus Labuschagne also hit a double century, reaching 204. Smith then took over, moving from 114 to an even 200 not out, one ball before Kraigg Brathwaite bowled Travis Head for 99 and Australia declared on 598 for four. West Indies were 74 without loss at the close. Smith now trails Matthew Hayden, Steve Waugh and Ricky Ponting, who leads the way with 41, in the list of Australian Test century-makers. **Geoff Lemon**

Rugby union

Jones calls Woodward 'sad' after criticism

Eddie Jones has hit back at Sir Clive Woodward and insisted he will leave England in a good shape when he leaves. Woodward was yet again fierce in his criticism of Jones on Sunday after Saturday's disappointing 27-13 loss to South Africa. The England head coach, however, told Men's Health UK: "I feel sad for him [Woodward]. If that is the best thing he has to do in his life, then he hasn't a lot to do. Results aren't perfect, but I'm happy with how I have been coaching." **PA Media**



Steve Smith punished West Indies with an unbeaten 200



Suárez celebrates Uruguay's eventual victory in the penalty shootout

'Devil' makes work with idle hands

Luis Suárez secures infamy in Ghana by handling the ball in the final minute of extra time in 2010
IVAN SEKRETAREV/AP PHOTO

'I'm not sorry': Suárez back in eye of the storm before Ghana rematch

Uruguay's 'devil himself' says he does not regret handball that broke a continent's heart as grudge match looms

Nick Ames
Doha

Just in case Ghanaian memories were fading, Uruguay granted them an audience with a ghost. Luis Suárez was not obliged to be the player put up for pre-match media duty but in he walked, 15 minutes before his manager, Diego Alonso, and held court on his own. It was less a red rag to a bull than an open invitation to set it charging but the unspoken message was clear: I am still here; I am still inside your heads.

He has resided in enough of them since the astonishing, dreamlike sequence in Johannesburg 12 years ago when his handball at the end of extra time broke a continent's hearts. The story is well rehearsed: Dominic Adiyiah's header would have sent Ghana to the semi-finals, making them the first African side to get that far, had Suárez not parried it on the line and taken a red card.

Suárez was distraught but there was always the off chance Asamoah Gyan would falter at the spot and squander his gift. That is what happened; a desperate Suárez, watching through his shirt from the mouth of the tunnel, wheeled away in fist-pumping celebration and Uruguay went through in the ensuing shootout.

If Ghana win when they finally renew acquaintances today, they will reach the last 16 and knock Uruguay out. The same will probably be true if they draw and, however much those around the camp attempt to play down any appetite for revenge, the symbolism would be huge. Progress is one thing but it also gets personal: at 35, Suárez's final match at Qatar 2022 will surely be his World Cup swansong.

The journalist who told Suárez that many in Ghana view him as "the devil himself", raising chuckles around a particularly well-populated auditorium, and would relish the chance to retire him was not exaggerating too wildly. Offered an opportunity to apologise for his sleight of hand, Suárez politely declined and pointed out Gyan had ample opportunity to ensure the only regrets were his.

"I didn't say sorry because I did the handball but Ghana's player missed the penalty, not me," he said. "Maybe I would apologise if I tackled and injured a player but in this situation I took the red card, the referee gave a penalty and it's not my fault because I didn't miss the penalty. The player who missed it said he'd do the same. It's not my responsibility to take the penalty."

Suárez was right: it was not as if, as the vuvuzelas trumpeted in disapproval around a fevered Soccer City, he had tampered with the rules and left Ghana without right of reply. His instinctive action should only have postponed the Black Stars' piece of history by a minute or so. There have certainly been less excusable flashpoints in his career and he alluded to one, the bite on Giorgio Chiellini four years later, when pressed on Ghana's desire to take vengeance.

> *'I took the red card, the referee gave a penalty and it's not my fault ... I didn't miss the penalty*

"The players that will play tomorrow, some of them were eight years old [in 2010]," he said. "Some people might say I'm the devil himself but we can't misunderstand things. We played against Portugal in 2018 and won against them. Have you heard Portuguese players saying: 'We need revenge'?

"Look at what I did with Chiellini. Yes, it was a mistake but I played against him afterwards in the Champions League and shook hands. We can't just keep thinking about the past."

It is hard not to when the past begins speaking directly to you. Gyan wrote in his autobiography that the "guilt and pain" of the miss are never far away and that he faces "a daily struggle to keep it out of mind"; the Ghana captain that night, Stephen Appiah, has said the anguish "is going to haunt us for the rest of our lives". Suárez's presence to preview the rematch was clearly provocative but the Ghana manager, Otto Addo, speaking half an hour after, was not inclined to fling mud.

"If the same incident had happened the other way round, and Ghana had gone through, people would have said: 'OK, it's normal that a player would do everything to reach the semis,'" he said. "It's not a big topic for me. I'd want every player to do all he can and even to sacrifice himself. What happened in 2010 is very sad but we can't change it - we want to look forward."

Addo's approach needs little explanation. If Ghana, the third-youngest side at this tournament, replicate the best of their inventive, dynamic attacking from the past week there is every chance they can finish the job. Mohammed Kudus, one of this winter's most exciting forwards, has demonstrated that he can live among the best. But if psychology overtakes the football there may only be one winner. Besides Suárez, four of Uruguay's squad from South Africa are still around. Diego Godín, Edinson Cavani, Martín Cáceres and Fernando Muslera know every trick in a well-thumbed book.

Suárez was dropped to the bench for Uruguay's defeat by Portugal but more extensive involvement against Ghana appears certain. Uruguay were fancied among the dark horses for this World Cup, the thought being that they finally have the midfield to connect a rugged defence and barrelling attack, but now they are on the brink and must win. "As the years go by you are not getting any younger and my pace is not what it used to be," Suárez admitted. Uruguay will hope his mere presence spooks Ghana into giving up an extra half-yard.



▲ *Uruguay players in training in Doha before their match against Ghana*
PABLO PORCIUNCULA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Group G

Switzerland and Serbia feel the weight of history

Meeting at Russia 2018 opened scars over Kosovo conflict but teams are playing down possibility of a repeat

Nick Ames
Doha

The flashpoints had been well signposted. When Serbia and Switzerland met in Kaliningrad at Russia 2018 it was clear from the outset that nobody would be fading out quietly. Xherdan Shaqiri's decision to recognise the land of his birth with a Kosovo flag stitched into the heel of his right boot had warmed a tinderbox that was already well stocked and, when Granit Xhaka celebrated his thudding equaliser by forming an Albanian eagle with his hands, tensions ignited.

Both players repeated the gesture when Shaqiri scored a dramatic late winner that ultimately ensured their side were the ones who reached the last 16; the recriminations were long, loud and ended with Fifa issuing several fines.

Given the teams meet again tonight with the stakes even higher, it is tempting to wonder just how busy the disciplinary chiefs may find themselves over the weekend. Last time out there remained one group stage game for fates to be confirmed: at Stadium 974 there will be no such leeway and whoever masters the occasion will take it all. Serbia must win and hope Brazil do not down tools against Cameroon; a point will suffice for Switzerland unless Rigobert Song's players contrive a shock.

Four years ago, hostilities had been publicly stoked, Aleksandar Mitrovic among those to question Shaqiri's choice of footwear. Serbia refuses to recognise Kosovo as an independent state and encounters with Shaqiri and Xhaka, who both signed a petition to Fifa 10 years ago pledging support for what became the official Kosovan national team, are imbued with added significance on both sides.

Yet much of the buildup to their latest showdown has resembled a convention of the saints. It was clear on Tuesday, when Sergej Milinkovic-Savic and Dusan Tadic took questions at Serbia's Al Arabi training base, that nobody was of a mind to dangle bait.

"There's no doubt it was big pressure four years ago but we need to focus on football and show we can play better than them," Tadic said when asked how Serbia would handle the occasion this time. His teammate matched the answer virtually word for word.

Mitrovic struck a similar note, saying: "It was a different game, we're not thinking about what happened before."

The problem is that the wider context tends to lurk beneath the surface and undermine any well-scripted words. Serbia are under Fifa investigation for displaying a flag showing Kosovo as part of their country, along with the words "We do not surrender", in their dressing room before their opening game against Brazil.

That did not go unnoticed in Kosovo, whose minister of culture, youth and sport, Hajrulla Ceku, described the image as "hateful, xenophobic and genocidal". Kosovo's football association called it an "aggressive action". Scars from the horrifying war between local forces and modern-day Serbia, fought in the 1990s, will never fully heal.

Perhaps that is why Serbia, whose rap sheet with the governing bodies is lengthy, have been so intent on message discipline this week. After the match in 2018 their FA was fined £41,000 on account of discriminatory banners and messages from their fans.

Xhaka and Shaqiri received £7,600 fines; the Albanian prime minister, Edi Rama, lent his backing to a "Don't be afraid of the eagle" crowdfunding initiative that raised enough money to pay them off. Two months later, Xhaka, the son of emigrants from Kosovo, promised such a flashpoint "will never happen again".

"There's nothing in the history behind these two games," Xhaka said this week, echoing his counterparts' tone. "We are Switzerland, they are Serbia and that's it. We're here to play football, as are they."

Switzerland have performed modestly but have grown as an attacking proposition since the last World Cup. Serbia are among the most creative, bewitching sides in the competition. There is pressure on the coach, Dragan Stojkovic, to give Dusan Vlahovic his first start of Qatar 2022 and form a potentially lethal pairing with Mitrovic.

"We're happy to focus on football tomorrow and respect each other," said the Switzerland manager, Murat Yakin, adding his voice to the entente. It remains to be seen whether any simmering enmity takes on a life of its own once again.



Granit Xhaka was fined for his sign in 2018

The matches



Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Netherlands **Q**	3	2	1	0	5	1	+4	**7**
Senegal **Q**	3	2	0	1	5	4	+1	**6**
Ecuador	3	1	1	1	4	3	+1	**4**
Qatar	3	0	0	3	1	7	-6	**0**

Qatar 0 Ecuador 2
Valencia 16pen 31
67,372

Senegal 0 Netherlands 2
Gakpo 84, Klaassen 90
41,721

Qatar 1 Senegal 3
Muntari 78 — Dia 41, Diédhou 48, B Dieng 84
41,797

Netherlands 1 Ecuador 1
Gakpo 6 — Valencia 49
44,833

Ecuador 1 Senegal 2
Caicedo 67 — I Sarr 44pen, Koulibaly 70
44,569

Netherlands 2 Qatar 0
Gakpo 26, F de Jong 49
66,784

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
England **Q**	3	2	1	0	9	2	+7	**7**
USA **Q**	3	1	2	0	2	1	+1	**5**
Iran	3	1	0	2	4	7	-3	**3**
Wales	3	0	1	2	1	6	-5	**1**

England 6 Iran 2
Bellingham 35, Saka 43 62, Sterling 45, Rashford 71, Grealish 89 — Taremi 65 90pen
45,334

USA 1 Wales 1
Weah 36 — Bale 82pen
43,418

Wales 0 Iran 2
Cheshmi 90, Rezaeian 90
40,875

England 0 USA 0
68,463

Iran 0 USA 1
Pulisic 38
42,127

Wales 0 England 3
Rashford 50 68, Foden 51
44,297

Group C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Argentina **Q**	3	2	0	1	5	2	+3	**6**
Poland **Q**	3	1	1	1	2	2	0	**4**
Mexico	3	1	1	1	2	3	-1	**4**
Saudi Arabia	3	1	0	2	3	5	-2	**3**

Argentina 1 Saudi Arabia 2
Messi 10pen — Al-Shehri 48, S Al-Dawsari 53
88,012

Mexico 0 Poland 0
39,369

Poland 2 Saudi Arabia 0
Zielinski 39, Lewandowski 82
44,259

Argentina 2 Mexico 0
Messi 64, Fernández 87
88,966

Poland 0 Argentina 2
Mac Allister 46, Álvarez 67
44,089

Saudi Arabia 1 Mexico 2
S Al-Dawsari 90 — Martín 47, Chávez 52
84,985

Group D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
France **Q**	3	2	0	1	6	3	+3	**6**
Australia **Q**	3	2	0	1	3	4	-1	**6**
Tunisia	3	1	1	1	1	1	0	**4**
Denmark	3	0	1	2	1	3	-2	**1**

Denmark 0 Tunisia 0
42,925

France 4 Australia 1
Rabiot 27, Giroud 32 71, Mbappé 68 — Goodwin 9
40,875

Tunisia 0 Australia 1
Duke 23
41,823

France 2 Denmark 1
Mbappé 61 86 — Christensen 68
42,860

Australia 1 Denmark 0
Leckie 60
41,232

Tunisia 1 France 0
Khazri 58
43,627

Group E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Japan **Q**	3	2	0	1	4	3	+1	**6**
Spain **Q**	3	1	1	1	9	3	+6	**4**
Germany	3	1	1	1	6	5	+1	**4**
Costa Rica	3	1	0	1	3	11	-8	**3**

Germany 1 Japan 2
Gündogan 33pen — Doan 75, Asano 83
42,608

Spain 7 Costa Rica 0
Olmo 11, Asensio 21, Torres 31pen 54, Gavi 74, Soler 90, Morata 90
40,013

Japan 0 Costa Rica 1
Fuller 81
41,479

Spain 1 Germany 1
Morata 62 — Füllkrug 83
68,895

Japan 2 Spain 1
Doan 48, Tanaka 51 — Morata 11
44,851

Costa Rica 2 Germany 4
Tejedea 58, Vargas 70 — Gnabry 10, Havertz 73 85, Füllkrug 89
67,054

Group F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Morocco **Q**	3	2	1	0	4	1	+3	**7**
Croatia **Q**	3	1	2	0	4	1	+3	**5**
Belgium	3	1	1	1	1	2	-1	**4**
Canada	3	0	0	3	2	7	-5	**0**

Morocco 0 Croatia 0
59,407

Belgium 1 Canada 0
Batshuayi 44
40,432

Belgium 0 Morocco 2
Saïss 73, Aboukhlal 90
43,738

Croatia 4 Canada 1
Kramaric 36 70, Livaja 44, Majer 90 — Davies 2
44,374

Croatia 0 Belgium 0
43,984

Canada 1 Morocco 2
Aguerd 40og — Ziyech 4, En-Nesyri 23
43,102

Group G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Brazil **Q**	2	2	0	0	3	0	+3	**6**
Switzerland	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	**3**
Cameroon	2	0	1	1	3	4	-1	**1**
Serbia	2	0	1	1	3	5	-2	**1**

Switzerland 1 Cameroon 0
Embolo 48
39,089

Brazil 2 Serbia 0
Richarlison 62 73
88,103

Cameroon 3 Serbia 3
Castelletto 29, Aboubakar 63, Choupo-Moting 66 — Pavlovic 45, S Milinkovic-Savic 45, A Mitrovic 53
39,789

Brazil 1 Switzerland 0
Casemiro 83
43,649

Serbia v Switzerland
Today, Stadium 974 — ITV4, 7pm

Cameroon v Brazil
Today, Lusail — ITV1, 7pm

Group H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Portugal **Q**	2	2	0	0	5	2	+3	**6**
Ghana	2	1	0	1	5	5	0	**3**
South Korea	2	0	1	1	2	3	-1	**1**
Uruguay	2	0	1	1	0	2	-2	**1**

Uruguay 0 South Korea 0
41,663

Portugal 3 Ghana 2
Ronaldo 65pen, Félix 78, Rafael Leão 80 — A Ayew 73, Bukari 89
42,662

South Korea 2 Ghana 3
Cho 58 61 — Salisu 24, Kudus 34 68
43,983

Portugal 2 Uruguay 0
Fernandes 54 90pen
88,668

Ghana v Uruguay
Today, Al Janoub — BBC2, 3pm

South Korea v Portugal
Today, Education City — BBC1, 3pm

Teams level on points are separated by goal difference, then goals scored. If still level, then on a head-to-head basis, first points, then goal difference, then goals scored. After that, fair play, and finally by the drawing of lots.

Last 16

49 Netherlands v USA
Tomorrow, Khalifa International — BBC1, 3pm

50 Argentina v Australia
Tomorrow, Ahmad bin Ali — BBC1, 7pm

51 England v Senegal
Sun, Al Bayt — ITV1, 7pm

52 France v Poland
Sun, Al Thumama — BBC1, 3pm

53 Japan v Croatia
Mon, Al Janoub — ITV1, 3pm

54 1G v 2H
Mon, Stadium 974 — BBC1, 7pm

55 Morocco v Spain
Tue, Education City — ITV1, 3pm

56 1H v 2G
Tue, Lusail — BBC1, 7pm

Quarter-finals

57 W49 v W50
Fri 9 Dec, Lusail — tbc, 7pm

58 W53 v W54
Fri 9 Dec, Education City — tbc, 3pm

59 W51 v W52
Sat 10 Dec, Al Bayt — tbc, 7pm

60 W55 v W56
Sat 10 Dec, Al Thumama — tbc, 3pm

Semi-finals

61 W57 v W58
Tue 13 Dec, Lusail — tbc, 7pm

62 W59 v W60
Wed 14 Dec, Al Bayt — tbc, 7pm

Third place playoff

L61 v L62
Sat 17 Dec, Khalifa International — tbc, 3pm

Final

W61 v W62
Sun 18 Dec
Lusail, 3pm
BBC/ITV



Today at the World Cup

Big day for Luis Suárez



Should he start for Uruguay against Ghana, Suárez is sure to be the centre of attention given ***that handball*** when the sides met in 2010. The 35-year-old has further stirred the pot with his pre-match comments.

Centre stage Son Heung-min

South Korea's tailsman has struggled to make an impact and his country really need him **to do something** against Portugal if they are to stand a chance of qualifying for the knockout stages.

Look out for Paulo Bento

South Korea's manager has confirmed he will sing both national anthems before his team's game against Portugal. "I was born Portuguese, I will die Portuguese," said Bento, who **won 35 caps** for Portugal as a player.



Number of the day

1990

The last time Cameroon qualified for the knockout stages. They could do so again by beating Brazil.

History-maker watch Dani Alves

Tite, Brazil's manager, will make changes for their game against Cameroon, with Alves confirmed as being among those coming into the side. He will do so as captain and, aged 39, will become the **oldest Brazilian** to play at a World Cup, surpassing the 38-year-old Thiago Silva.



Did you know?

Ghana's captain, Andre Ayew, is the only member of the squad who was also part of the team that faced Uruguay in the **quarter-final** 12 years ago. He was an unused substitute.

'What a guy. I will show Almirón the most respect next time'

Jack Grealish addresses episode with Newcastle's in-form winger and his fan celebration at the World Cup

David Hytner
Doha

By his own admission, Jack Grealish has packed a lot of "stupid stuff" into his 27 years. The Miguel Almirón episode was surely a good example. Grealish was a little drunk and extremely euphoric (or perhaps it was the other way around) as he celebrated Manchester City's Premier League title triumph last season and he was asked by his teammate Bernardo Silva to explain the final-day comeback win over Aston Villa.

Grealish being Grealish, he got carried away with one of his jokes and ended up performing a drive-by on Almirón, the Newcastle winger. One of the secrets, Grealish said on a video shared on social media, was to substitute Riyad Mahrez because "he played like Almirón". "Do you know what?" Grealish says from England's World Cup training base in Al Wakrah. "I haven't actually been asked about that and let me just address it."

And so Grealish does. He makes the point that he had been drinking but, really, there was no excuse. He regrets it and is sorry. Grealish says he reached out to the Newcastle defender Matt Targett, with whom he played at Villa, to ask whether he could pass on an apology to Almirón. "Matt just said: 'Jack, he's a lovely kid, he's harmless and he doesn't speak a lot of English … he won't really be bothered,'" Grealish says. "I didn't want to reply [to Almirón] on social media because you dig a bigger hole and I've been there with other stuff."

Grealish would reflect even harder when Almirón gave an interview after he was named as the Premier League's player of the month for October. Almirón, who scored six goals during the period - he has eight for the season - said that Grealish's comment had nothing to do with his stellar form. "Jack's a great player first and foremost and I wish him all the best as I always do," Almirón said.



Grealish keeps eye on the ball in Qatar

Jack Grealish has come on as a substitute in all three of England's games so far - and scored against Iran
MARTIN RICKETT/PA WIRE

> ***'I like to enjoy myself and just go with the flow but I do some stupid stuff sometimes that I do regret'***

"I thought: 'What a guy,'" Grealish says. "Because if that was me and somebody had said that about me, I'd have probably been the other way and been like: 'Fuck it.' I didn't realise it was a video to go out but even in private I shouldn't have said it because he's a fellow professional. I've had a lot of stick off the Newcastle fans and rightly so.

"I like to enjoy myself and just go with the flow but I do some stupid stuff sometimes that I do regret. When I next play against him, I'll show him the most respect because that's what he's done in a situation where he probably didn't have to. I genuinely hope he does keep scoring - as long as those Newcastle fans stop messaging me."

Grealish is asked whether he has put Almirón in his Fantasy Football team. "Nah, I don't play that," he replies. "Everyone loves it. I get about 100 messages every week saying: 'Is [Erling] Haaland starting?' It's not really for me. I love my football but I can't be arsed with it."

Grealish is nothing if not open and honest. And if he veers off course, at times, his heart is in the right place. When he scored in England's 6-2 win over Iran in the opening round of group games, he performed a wavy-armed celebration in tribute to a young City fan he had met called Finlay, who has cerebral palsy. Grealish's sister, Mollie, also has the condition.

"I don't do that for any clout or whatever," Grealish says. "I do that because that's what I feel I'm good at sometimes. Because I can relate to it with my little sister. It's nice for him [Finlay] because he'll go back to school and probably be quite popular. It ended up being so nice and quite emotional."

It is hard not to warm to Grealish as he holds court, keeping the tone light, at one point despairing at the union flag waistcoat that his dad, Kevin, has insisted on wearing to matches. Grealish is in Qatar to enjoy himself, to be himself, because that is the only way he knows and it is the key to who he is on the pitch – a player who wants to express himself without fear.

Grealish's numbers have not been great since his £100m move from Villa to City in the summer of last year – seven goals, four assists in all competitions – and there is exasperation when he considers how such metrics are "all that people go on about now … so much more than they should."

What Grealish wants people to recognise is courage on the ball and he brings up Silva, who he describes as probably the best player he has played with. Grealish jumps out of his seat to illustrate a moment from a City game in

7
The number of goals scored by Jack Grealish since his £100m move from Aston Villa to City

which Pep Guardiola ordered Silva to take the ball off the toes of the goalkeeper, Ederson, to build a move practically from the goalline.

"Bernardo goes off on his little dribble around and I was like: 'What does he think he's doing? He thinks it's school football!'" Grealish says. "He is unbelievable. He doesn't get loads of goals and assists. But the way he takes the ball under pressure …

"Pep says he wants us to show balls, wanting the ball under pressure when the opposition crowd are against you – when you're at Anfield, everyone is whistling and you're saying: 'Give me the ball.' That is Bernardo in a nutshell. That's what I think I do a little bit."

Grealish's love of the game and the way that he cherishes the ball shines through. It was stamped all over a recent video of him and his City and England teammate Phil Foden playing a game of long-distance no-bounce, their touches and volleys sumptuous.

"Luke Shaw said to me: 'When I come away with England, you can tell who the City lads are,'" Grealish says. "He said: 'You always have a ball, you always want a ball.' We get that from being at City. At Villa, you'd be sitting there, [players] on their phones … then at City, you're sitting there and balls are flying across the changing room, people playing two-touch."

Grealish has made an impact off the bench in each of England's three games so far. With Senegal looming in the last 16 on Sunday, he intends to embrace any opportunity.

Anchorman Rice ready to give England edge in midfield battle

West Ham captain knows he and Bellingham must establish control to overcome quality opposition in last 16

Jacob Steinberg
Doha

When it comes to analysing the loss to Italy in the final of Euro 2020, it is hard to get past the way England were forced to retreat as the game wore on and the battle for midfield supremacy began to tilt in the direction of Jorginho and Marco Verratti.

It is a familiar tale of woe. Ten years ago it was Andrea Pirlo completing more passes than the England midfield when Italy knocked them out of Euro 2012. The flaws were clear but little changed.

This is a tournament tradition – a thread that runs from Pirlo's masterclass in Kyiv to Ivan Rakitic and Luka Modric taking back control for Croatia in the semi-final of the 2018 World Cup – and it could trip up England again if they reach the later stages in Qatar.

The challenge is not lost on the players. There was no attempt from Declan Rice to hide away from the topic yesterday. He remembers England losing their Nations League semi-final to the Netherlands three years ago. It was Rice's third cap and he has not forgotten Frenkie de Jong dominating midfield for the Dutch, who fought back from a goal down to win in extra time.

"My time against De Jong, I was really young," Rice said. "I was only 19. I said at the time he was a really special player. If I want to be one of the best I need to test myself against the best. And as a central midfield group in England, if we want to be one of the best we need to win midfield battles."

Rice has developed since facing De Jong. West Ham's captain is one of the most commanding midfielders in the Premier League and has become an automatic starter for England, who meet Senegal in the last 16 on Sunday. It is not a surprise Chelsea, Manchester City and Manchester United will battle to sign him next summer.

Even so, it was tough for Rice and Kalvin Phillips when they took on Jorginho and Verratti last year. Are England geared to take on that kind of deep-lying playmaker? They made a fast start in that final, taking an early lead through Luke Shaw, but Roberto Mancini's tactical tweaks changed the game.

"When you play against the better nations they are always going to have top midfield players," Rice said. "They are going to have players that control games and it's about how we can counteract that.

"Italy had an extra man in midfield because we set up with a back five, so it was hard to get pressure on the ball. It was hard to get up to the ball because they would pop it off and get you out of your slot. It's about learning and being that coach on the pitch yourself."

The hope is that England will be more prepared if they face Adrien Rabiot and Aurélien Tchouaméni of France in the last eight, or the Spanish midfield of Gavi, Pedri and Sergio Busquets later down the line. The quality is there. Rice offers power and poise in front of the back four. He was excellent when England drew with Germany in September – Joshua Kimmich and Ilkay Gündogan were second-best that night – and has developed a solid understanding with Jude Bellingham, who has made the midfield less predictable.

"We're learning really well together," Rice said of his partnership with Bellingham. "There's been a lot of goals he's scored this year where he's made that late run into the box. He's really added that to his game. [Frank] Lampard was the best at it, arriving really late. He's really starting to show that now."

Listening to Rice, it was clear why he is regarded as a leader. No question fazed him. He raved about Marcus Rashford – "his speed, his eye for goal, the way he hits the ball, it's really special" – and took on Mason Mount's critics.

"I don't need to talk too much about Mase," he said. "He just doesn't fit the agenda of what people want an attacking midfield player to look like. He is one of the best players I've played with. He is such a team player, such a hard-working, honest guy.

"Sometimes people online just don't like him. For what reason, I honestly don't know. His numbers for Chelsea are incredible."

The spirit in the camp is good. Rice spoke about the camaraderie in the squad and laughed about adopting Chesney Hawkes as a lucky mascot after the singer's half-time performance during England's win over Wales.

But it was not all fun and games. This is a big moment for Rice. He pushes forward for West Ham but he is England's anchorman. It is on him to win the ball, set the tempo and plug the gaps when Harry Maguire steps out of defence; to perform the kind of job Busquets still does so well for Spain. Above all, it is on Rice to learn from past failures. England cannot afford to lose another midfield battle.

'I want to play in the Champions League'

Declan Rice has indicated he wants to leave West Ham, saying he wants to win trophies and play in the Champions League. The midfielder has no intention of extending his deal and is expected to be sold next summer. Chelsea, Manchester City and Manchester United are interested and Newcastle may enter the race if they qualify for the Champions League. It is thought West Ham will allow their captain to leave, even though they will hope to deter bidders by demanding a large fee of at least £100m. "One hundred per cent I want to play in the Champions League," he said. "For the last two or three years I've been saying that. I've been playing consistently well for my club and I feel like I really want to keep pushing. I see my friends here who are playing Champions League and for big trophies. You only get one career and at the end you want to look back at what you've won and the biggest games you've played in." Jacob Steinberg


▲ *Declan Rice trains with the England squad for Sunday's game with Senegal*
NICOLAS TUCAT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Diouf accuses Three Lions of complacency before clash

Jamie Jackson
Doha

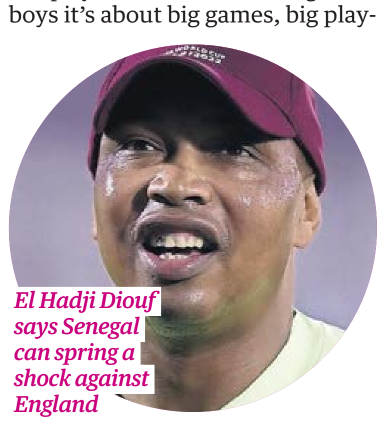
El Hadji Diouf has accused England of believing they have already beaten Senegal and warned that could lead to another famous World Cup victory for his country.

Diouf, who was part of the Senegal team that defeated France at the 2002 tournament, is an assistant coach with the squad preparing to meet England in Sunday's last-16 tie in Qatar. He was complimentary about Gareth Southgate's side but feels they are guilty of complacency.

"I never say Senegal can't win," the former Liverpool forward said. "It reminds me of when we play against France: they win the game before they play it and I think England today do the same thing, which is good for us.

"We don't have anything to show the world. If you see our squad, we have Édouard Mendy, we have Kalidou Koulibaly [both Chelsea], we have a lot of good players in England. Some play in the Championship but they are really Premier League players, like Ismaïla Sarr [of Watford]. It's for them to show how good they are.

"It is a wonderful draw — who would not want to play this game? The players are excited. Talking to the boys it's about big games, big players, they have to show how good they are. And definitely, this game is going to be very exciting because England have a good team, good players. I know we are not the favourites but we are going to do everything to beat them and the players can do it."


El Hadji Diouf says Senegal can spring a shock against England

Diouf said the pressure was all on Southgate's men. "Definitely yes. England have to [win] but we have to show them that the game is not finished before we play."

Senegal won the Africa Cup of Nations on penalties in February and Diouf is confident they can beat England the same way. "We are always going to win on penalties," he said. "If we get to penalties we're going to win it. Easy. I know the goalkeeper we've got [Mendy] and I know we can stop some of their penalties."

Lukaku lashes out after painful misses send Belgium home

Croatia 0

Belgium 0

	Croatia	Belgium
Possession	50%	50%
Shots on target	4	3
Fouls	7	9

Ben Fisher
Ahmad bin Ali Stadium

The truth is Romelu Lukaku probably should have departed the pitch cradling the match ball but the painful reality is the striker left empty-handed, his hat-trick of second-half misses condemning Belgium to a damning and premature World Cup exit. The worst one of the lot came deep into stoppage time. Thorgan Hazard crossed from the right and an unmarked Lukaku made a beeline for the six-yard box but instead of converting from close range the ball bumbled off of his chest and into the arms of the Croatia goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic.

Thierry Henry, one of Roberto Martínez's assistants, covered his eyes with his tracksuit top. Thomas Meunier chucked a water bottle into the ground. Yannick Carrasco threw a towel over his face. At the final whistle, Lukaku punched through the casing of the Belgium dugout in pure rage before being consoled by Youri Tielemans.

Cue the jokes about Lukaku finally hitting the target. Toby Alderweireld, one of those who surely will not return to this stage, lay on the turf. In the stands a very much on-brand Belgium supporter dressed, naturally, as a bright yellow cone of chips stood hands in pockets in disbelief.

Some fans earlier jeered the arrival of Eden Hazard who entered from the substitutes' bench for the final seven minutes. For Belgium's golden generation, this last hurrah fell so painfully flat and afterwards Martínez confirmed this unedifying exit would represent his last game in charge. "I can't carry on," he said. Croatia, runners-up four years ago, go through to play the winners of Group E in the last 16.

In mitigation, Lukaku, who also cannoned a shot against a post, arrived in Qatar on the back of two substitute appearances since August. Perhaps it was no surprise the striker was rusty. Not that it makes Belgium's deeply underwhelming tournament easier to explain.

At the outset Kevin De Bruyne had dismissed his side's chances of lifting the trophy and in recent days Belgium had to play down talk of rifts after Eden Hazard criticised the sluggish makeup of an ageing defence. The sight of Martínez protesting to the fourth official about the failure to award a free-kick for a back-pass after the ball went to the keeper off Josko Gvardiol epitomised the frustrations.

That a Mexican wave rippled around this ground on 41 minutes as Alderweireld and Jan Vertonghen tossed the ball from side to side spoke volumes of the entertainment on offer in a first half where the only drama was a VAR review that led the referee, Anthony Taylor, to revoke the award of a Croatia penalty.

Vertonghen headed a free-kick clear from the edge of the six-yard box but when Carrasco failed to trap the ball he proceeded to foul Andrej Kramaric, prompting Taylor to point to the spot. Luka Modric grabbed the ball and Croatia's substitutes lined the edge of the technical area in anticipation – if not expectation – but then Taylor visited the pitchside VAR monitor, which detailed Dejan Lovren was offside when challenging Vertonghen inside the box.

At 35 Vertonghen was the oldest player in a starting lineup with the eldest average age at a World Cup since Australia's against Germany in 2010. Martínez's big call was to demote Eden Hazard to the bench, with the Real Madrid forward among four players dropped after the defeat to Morocco. Dries Mertens and Leandro Trossard made their first starts of the tournament. At almost 27 the Leicester full-back Timothy Castagne was the puppy of the side.

Belgium made a shaky start – Ivan Perisic curled a shot wide inside 11 seconds after being released by Modric and a minute later Leander Dendoncker was chasing a red-and-white chequered Croatia shirt facing his own goal. While they roused, Martínez changed personnel and system at half-time, Lukaku coming on the trigger for a switch to a 3-4-3.

Lukaku's presence gave Croatia something to think about and Gvardiol panicked and stuck out his left leg at the front post to prevent De Bruyne's cross from reaching the lurking striker. A minute later Lukaku sent a tame header at Livakovic from a De Bruyne cross. Then he sent a header over from another De Bruyne cross, although the offside flag would have ensured any celebrations were short-lived.

But as this game ticked towards the hour mark Belgium stitched together a slick move, from which they will wonder how they did not prosper. Particularly Lukaku. De Bruyne angled a wonderful pass, as if by subterfuge, into Carrasco, whose fine first touch allowed him to tiptoe between two Croatia defenders and mosey towards goal.

Carrasco seemed to do everything right but his shot was blocked by the boot of the outstretched Josip Juranovic. The ball then spiralled invitingly across the box for Lukaku but he could only send a rasping strike against Livakovic's left post. The maddening thing for Lukaku and Belgium was that worse – much worse – was still to come.



▲ *Romelu Lukaku shoots against the Croatia keeper's left post during the second half of Belgium's costly draw*
ALFREDO ESTRELLA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



◀ *Lukaku looks on in disbelief after one of his missed chances during Belgium's premature exit*
BERNADETT SZABO/REUTERS



▼ *Anthony Taylor signals after checking the pitchside screen and ruling out for offside a penalty he had awarded to Croatia*
MICHAEL STEELE/GETTY IMAGES



Dejan Lovren and Luka Modric celebrate after Croatia reach the last 16

Croatia
4-3-3
Livakovic; Juranovic, Lovren, Gvardiol, Sosa; Modric, Brozovic, Kovacic (Majer 90); Kramaric (Pasalic 64), Livaja (Petkovic 64), Perisic

Belgium
4-2-3-1
Courtois; Meunier (E Hazard 87), Alderweireld, Vertonghen, Castagne; Dendoncker (Tielemans 72), Witsel; De Bruyne, Mertens (Lukaku ht), Carrasco (Doku 72); Trossard (T Hazard 59)

Referee Anthony Taylor (Eng) **Attendance** 43,984

Analysis

Andy Hunter *Ahmad bin Ali Stadium*



Martínez departs after the golden – but olden – generation fail to establish a true legacy

Roberto Martínez embraced each and every one of his backroom staff, then did the same to every player before going over to applaud a small cluster of Belgium fans whose boos could be heard above the din of the stadium PA. His six-year reign as head coach is over and so, despite his protestations to the contrary, are the World Cup dreams of a golden generation. They leave behind a diminished legacy.

From third at the World Cup in 2018 to third in their group in 2022, Belgium's decline, anticipated by Kevin De Bruyne, accelerated during a miserable time in Qatar. But for a series of misses from Romelu Lukaku the team ranked second in the world would have qualified from Group F at the expense of a more accomplished Croatia. It would have been a feat of escapology unworthy of their efforts.

A tearful Lukaku collapsed into the arms of the coach Thierry Henry before punching out the perspex on the side of the Belgium dugout after a second-half substitute appearance that defied belief. The Internazionale forward missed four gilt-edged chances and was denied by a superb last-ditch challenge by the masked Josko Gvardiol as Belgium belatedly rallied.

It was not enough and it was no consolation that talk of being too old to shape a World Cup was disproved by a 37-year-old. That was Luka Modric, the oldest, finest player on the pitch.

The sun has set on a trophyless generation that has given a clear sense here of growing tired of each other. A team trying to demonstrate unity in response to numerous allegations of fractures within the squad – from dressing-room bust-ups to star names not speaking to one another – had a strange way of showing unity.

They all put their left arms over the shoulders of the teammate to their left during the national anthem, apart from Thibaut Courtois and De Bruyne, who stood with arms by their sides. Collectively, there was little evidence until the closing stages of the match of fighting for a common cause, to preserve their place on the biggest stage.

The game is up for this gifted but ageing group. It had sounded that way even before they produced one more soporific display, with Martínez presenting his case for the defence of the golden generation on the eve of a must-win game against Croatia.

His argument started convincingly enough, with a reminder that this crop has achieved more than any previous incarnation of the Red Devils. "In 2016 we were not the golden generation," he said. "The golden generation were the ones who reached the semi-finals in Mexico in 1986. Since then, this generation has become the golden generation of Belgian football.

"There is no doubt. They won the bronze medal in 2018, for four years they were No 1 in the world, 21 of them have their [Uefa] A licences, which means they will be coaching the next generation for the next 20 years. And in this time we have built a state-of-the-art training facility. They haven't won a tournament but leaving a legacy is more important than winning a tournament."

Sorry, what? Finishing third at a World Cup, a nice training ground and a host of coaching qualifications is more important than winning the thing? Not sure the Argentinians who worship Diego Maradona see it that way.

Martínez was in the right place for talk of questionable legacies at least. Qatar, and by extension Fifa, has been big on sustainability at this World Cup, where only one of the eight stadiums will remain in its current form once the tournament is finished.

Lusail Stadium, the venue for the World Cup final, is being converted into shops, schools, sports facilities and health clinics. Another, made of 974 shipping containers, is being dismantled. The remaining five will have upper tiers removed and their capacities halved.

A sustainable legacy seems to be how you package it in Qatar. Martínez had talked up Belgium's and for one bright, sustained period there was substance to his claims. But it is over now and, like the post-World Cup future for Qatar's stadiums, the golden generation's standing has been much reduced.



▲ *Roberto Martínez and Kevin De Bruyne after the Croatia draw*

▼ *Hakim Ziyech celebrates with teammates after giving Morocco the lead*
MATTHIAS HANGST/GETTY IMAGES



Morocco aiming for the sky after surprise first place in group

Canada	**1**
Aguerd 40og	
Morocco	**2**
Ziyech 4, En-Nesyri 23	

	Canada	Morocco
Possession	60%	40%
Shots on target	0	2
Fouls	14	14

Bryan Armen Graham
Al Thumama Stadium

Morocco are through to the last 16 of the World Cup for the second time after early goals from Hakim Ziyech and Youssef En-Nesyri brushed aside whatever suspense remained of their progress. It sealed a nightmarish exit to a tournament for Canada that began with so much promise nine nights ago.

The mighty Atlas Lions entered the group-stage finale full of confidence, having followed a cagey goalless draw with Croatia with an emphatic 2-0 win over second-ranked Belgium and needing only a point to book a place in the knockout stage for the first time in nearly four decades. They finished it, owing to Croatia's draw with Belgium across town, the improbable winners of a group above of a pair of European giants fresh off runs to the last four in 2018.

"We said we wanted to give everything we've got to get out of the group stages," said Walid Regragui, who was appointed Morocco's manager three months ago. "We can tick that box now. So why not aim for the sky?

"We needed to change and we needed to change our mentality. We're not going to stop here. We've got a lot of respect for all of the different opponents, but we are going to be a very difficult team to beat."

Les Rouges, who were picked apart by Croatia and eliminated from the competition despite outplaying Belgium in their opener, appeared out of sorts from the start here in a hostile atmosphere with the crowd jeering their every touch.

Morocco needed four minutes to send their supporters into delirium as Steven Vitória's undercooked backpass to Milan Borjan forced the goalkeeper to dash from his penalty area with En-Nesyri closing in. A harried Borjan played it directly to the Chelsea winger Ziyech, who chipped in from 35 yards and ignited the mass of red packed into the stadium's south end. It was the howler of the tournament and surely the nadir of Canada's first World Cup appearance since their largely forgettable debut in 1986.

Canada were able to get their feet under them but failed to generate a meaningful threat from their possession and set-pieces and it was not long before Morocco were bossing the midfield again. They doubled their lead after 23 minutes through En-Nesyri, when the Sevilla striker chased down a long ball from the back, darted between a pair of defenders and beat Borjan at his near post to become the first Moroccan to score in two World Cups.

There were remnants from Canada of the pace and industry that powered their swaggering performance against Belgium, but they were constantly done in by lack of organisation from front to back, unable to string together more than a few passes or long stretches of the first half. Their woes were embodied by an inability to get Alphonso Davies involved as the 22-year-old was constantly denied service by Morocco's swarming defenders.

The well-drilled backline, marshalled by Paris Saint-Germain's Achraf Hakimi, were one of two teams left in the competition, along with Brazil, who had yet to concede. But Canada pulled one back five minutes before half-time when Nayef Aguerd blocked a cross from the left past his keeper inside the near post, the first own goal of the tournament and a cruel end to Morocco's run of six successive clean sheets.

With nothing left to play for but the chance to end their tournament on a high note and set a winning tone for when they co-host four years from now, Canada's fighting spirit shone through during the second half as John Herdman – their manager from Consett in County Durham – made a triple substitution after an hour and threw numbers forward with abandon.

They came agonisingly close to an equaliser when a header by the ageless captain, Atiba Hutchinson – the oldest outfield player in Qatar – rattled the bar and caromed down on the goalline. But Morocco's rigid backline refused to budge, ensuring Africa's record sixth win at a World Cup while becoming the first team from the continent to take first place in a group since Nigeria in 1998.

"We've raised our bar finishing top of Concacaf and I thought that was a good standard to bring in," Herdman said. "We always said the world level is the next level and I don't think we were far off.

"Two inches tonight. Two inches from getting our first result. That's all it was."

Canada
4-4-2
Borjan; Johnston, Vitória●, Miller, Adekugbe● (Kone 61); Osorio● (Laryea 66), Kaye (Hutchinson 60), Davies, Buchanan; Larin (David 60), Hoilett● (Wotherspoon 76)

Morocco
4-3-3
Bounou; Hakimi (Jabrane 85), Aguerd, Saïss, Mazraoui; Ounahi (El Yamiq 77), Amrabat, Sabiri (Amallah 65); Ziyech (Hamdallah 76), En-Nesyri, Boufal (Aboukhlal 65)

Referee Raphael Claus (Br) **Attendance** 43,102

Japan land knockout blow but Spain cling on for more

Japan 2
Doan 48, Tanaka 51

Spain 1
Morata 11

	Japan	Spain
Possession	22%	78%
Shots on target	3	5
Total attempts	6	12

Paul MacInnes
Khalifa International Stadium

Not content with one jaw-dropping shock in Group E, Japan managed a second in feverish conditions to beat a multitalented Spain side and claim another place for Asia in the last 16 of this increasingly unpredictable World Cup.

Two goals in three minutes just after half-time – one that was scored by the very finest of margins – shocked Spain cold, taking their metronomic rhythms and throwing them into a bin bag that was then politely disposed of. The Europeans still qualified for the knockout stages, in second place on goal difference ahead of Germany, but if this was a deliberate attempt to choose an easier path through the draw, nobody told that to their shellshocked players.

For Japan this was a landmark achievement, not so much for the fact of qualifying – it is their third round of 16 in the last four World Cups – but for the manner with which they did it. A narrow defeat by Costa Rica was sandwiched by victories over two European powerhouses, the world champions of 2010 and 2014. The players remained on the pitch for a long period after the stands of the Khalifa International Stadium had begun to empty, soaking up the moment with ebullient travelling fans and a crowd of photographers.

Statistics show that Japan averaged possession of just 18% and they completed 175 passes to Spain's 991. But in the brief evisceration that occurred shortly after half-time, Japan deservedly won the match. For all of Spain's technical control, much of it beautiful to watch, they did not do enough to affect the match. Spain now go on to face a well-organised Morocco side, who finished top of Group F. Japan will play Croatia.

Changing places

In a 26-minute span in the second half of these matches, the live scenario of teams advancing from Group E changed four times:
47min *Spain/Germany*
48min *Spain/Japan*
51min *Japan/Spain*
70min *Japan/Costa Rica*
73min *Japan/Spain*

Spain dominated from the off and scored early. Forced back into a flat, nervous-looking back five, Japan were unable to close the spaces around their penalty area and after Gavi had seen a low cross half-cleared in the 12th minute, Nico Williams worked it back to César Azpilicueta on the edge of the box. His cross was looped and precise, finding Álvaro Morata on the penalty spot. He buried a header back across Shuichi Gonda for his third goal of the tournament.

The teenaged Gavi, alongside his 20-year-old Barcelona partner Pedri, were the stars of the first half, orbiting around their midfield anchor Sergio Busquets with a trajectory hidden from their opponents. Spain's only enemy in the opening 45 minutes was themselves, the propensity for coughing up possession as they built from defence a trend that had continued from the Germany game.

Japan went into the interval a goal down but, in the mind of their coach, Hajime Moriyasu, the plan was working. He made a double substitution at the break and both Brighton's Kaoru Mitoma and Ritsu Doan of Freiburg were instrumental in changing the match.

An already aggressive Japanese press increased in intensity and the Spaniards' achilles heel was evident three minutes after the restart. A jittery Simón played a loose pass out to the left-back Alejandro Balde, who was unable to clear before Doan was upon him. The midfielder descended on to the box and unleashed a shot with all the power he could muster, which was way more than Simón could handle as the keeper palmed the ball into the roof of his net.

The atmosphere kicked up a notch and before anyone had a chance to catch their breath Japan were in front. Again it was Doan who made it, again bulldozing his way past a now bewildered Balde and crossing to the left-hand side where Mitoma cut the ball back for Ao Tanaka to bundle home.

Japan's players were delirious, their subs on the pitch, only for the goal to be ruled out; the ball had apparently gone out of play as Mitoma kicked it. The gods of VAR then deliberated – aided by the positional sensor in the Al Rihla ball – and they found the goal was good. It had stayed in by fractions, and Japanese fancy dress headscarves were coming off in disbelief.

A flurry of substitutions for both sides followed, with Morata and Gavi withdrawn for Spain, but gone altogether was the Spanish composure as suddenly, ludicrously, they faced the possibility of elimination. For a minute or two it was even a reality, when Costa Rica took a brief lead against Germany. Luis Enrique said he would have had a heart attack had he realised.

Marco Asensio and Dani Olmo had opportunities for an equaliser blocked and saved, but Japan had the clearest chance to score when Mitoma played Takuma Asano clear through on goal, only for the substitute to slip and scoop his shot. Japan managed to channel the same determination that had seen them over the line against Germany and, when the final whistle came, all was bedlam.

Japan 3-4-3
Gonda; Taniguchi●, Itakura●, Yoshida●; Ito, Tanaka (Endo 87), Morita, Nagatomo (Mitoma ht); Kubo (Doan ht), Kamada (Tomiyasu 69), Maeda (Asano 62)

Spain 4-3-3
Simón; Azpilicueta (Carvajal ht), P Torres, Rodri, Balde (Alba 68); Busquets, Gavi (Fati 68), Pedri; Williams (F Torres 57), Olmo, Morata (Asensio 57)

Referee Victor Gomes (SA) **Attendance** 44,851



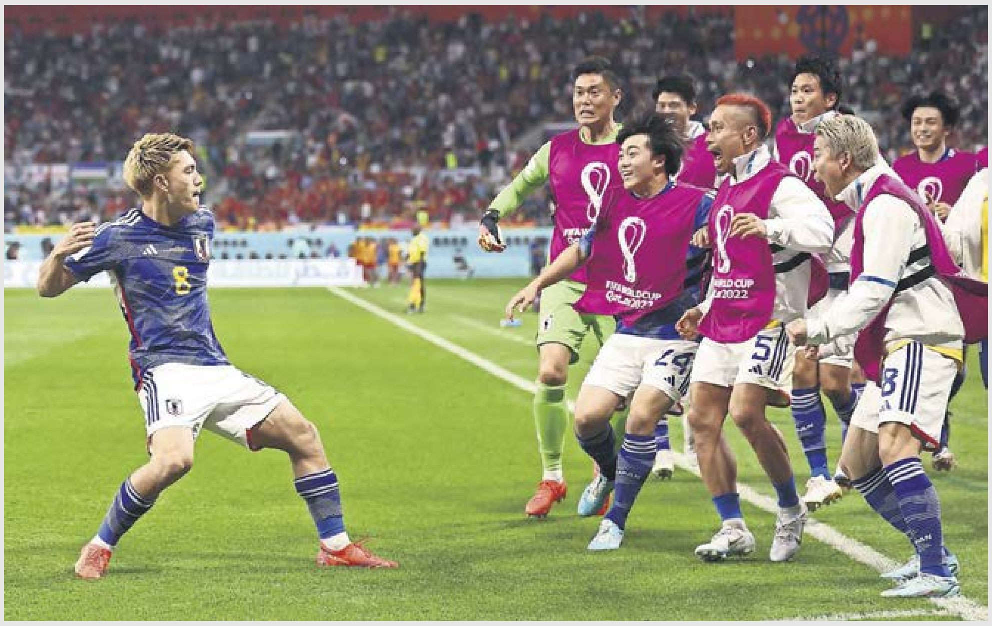
Spain reel in face of Japanese whirlwind

Ao Tanaka puts Japan in front as his side turned the game on its head in three minutes
ABEDIN TAHERKENAREH/EPA

Analysis

Sid Lowe *Khalifa International Stadium*





◀ *Ritsu Doan runs to celebrate with his Japan teammates after scoring the equaliser against Spain*
XINHUA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Simón plays team into trouble in extraordinary turnaround to flip World Cup upside down

Suddenly they went wild and just as suddenly they stopped again. Japan's players though would be given a second chance and so, it turned out, would Spain's. Ao Tanaka had bundled the ball into the net, the World Cup was upside down again and a sprint had begun, squad and staff racing each other from bench to corner to join their colleagues on the pitch. Hajime Moriyasu's side had scored twice in three minutes and so, for the second time at this tournament, they were now winning a match that had seemed way beyond them; that hadn't seemed like a match at all, in fact.

Better still, 2-1 up out of nowhere, just as they went ahead out of nowhere against Germany, they were on their way through. Except the ball had crossed the line as it had been scrambled into the six-yard box for the finish. Or so it seemed. From one angle, it looked clearly over the line, but there were others, lines to be drawn and a drama to be drawn out. So now everything was on hold.

In the corner, they froze mid-celebration like a mannequin challenge. Moriyasu spoke to the fourth official. Sergio Busquets tried to speak to the referee. And the referee, Victor Gomes, tried to listen, which wasn't easy. He stood and waited, finger in his ear. In the VAR room, they took their time. In the stands, some prayed. The seconds passed, the first sign that this might not be what it seemed. And then, eventually, Gomes drew a screen, pointed to the centre and Japan's players went wild again, for the third time in six minutes.

It would not be the last. This was extraordinary, a repeat of that opening win. By the end, the manager was bowing before the crowd. An hour earlier, they would not have embraced him like they did at that moment. Back then, Japan had been outplayed, unable to get near the ball. Now they were all over Spain, driven by need, destiny, not allowing the *Selección* to breathe.

It was hard not to wonder how good they would be if they could do this in both halves, to ask how Ritsu Doan and Kaoru Mitoma could be introduced only at the break. That energy is hard to maintain, of course. Imagine if you could do that for 90 minutes.

How had Spain permitted this? As Japan's players celebrated the second, which ultimately sent them through, on the touchline the Spain manager, Luis Enrique, shook his head. On the goalline, Unai Simón stood, looking lost, as if trying to work out just what they had done. They had shot themselves in the foot. *Shot*? Can you pass yourself in the foot? Because that's what had happened: Spain had played the Japanese back into the game.

Japan had played themselves into it, too, but Busquets said the *Selección* breathed life into them. It is systemic, too, which makes the analysis more lasting. Playing out is a choice and the right one, the coach and goalkeeper insist, but it is a fine line they tread. Simón says he is the free man, there to play as well as save. Teammates must use him. They accept potential consequences, if maybe not like this. Every game brings at least one heart attack with the ball at Simón's feet, it seems; this time, it was almost fatal.

> *How had Spain permitted this? As Japan's players celebrated, Luis Enrique shook his head*

He had already risked dribbling by an opponent in the first half. Early in the second, under pressure, Japan identifying him as a target, he played a pass to the left. The ball came back to him and he clipped to the right. Alejandro Balde struggled to control it. Tanaka robbed him and smashed the ball into the net.

Japan led, Spain had got themselves into a fine mess. Or was this actually better? They were going through in second place, avoiding the possibility of a quarter-final against the Group G winners, almost certainly Brazil, getting an extra day's rest, too. There was one flaw: it assumed Spain went through and soon that was not so assured. Elsewhere, Costa Rica scored and for a while Spain and Germany were both out. There was panic now, and not much play until a roar rolled off the stands and revived them.

Germany's pursuit of survival did not ultimately rescue them but did save Spain, allowing them to secure a scenario so perfect you almost wondered if the whole thing had not been a masterplan, an act of genius, with act being the word: the *Selección* progressed in a better place and Germany were out.

The way they walked off, though, spoke of the fear they had felt, that aura of confidence they had exuded gone, the two teams through but expressing very different emotions, outwardly at least. Spain's players departed, heads down but still in. All around them the Japanese were celebrating again.

Road to the final Knockout paths take shape

- **Netherlands v USA** – Sat 3 Dec, 3pm
- **Argentina v Australia** – Sat 3 Dec, 7pm
- QF Fri 9 Dec, 7pm
- **1G v 2H** – Mon 5 Dec, 7pm
- **Japan v Croatia** – Mon 5 Dec, 3pm
- QF Fri 9 Dec, 3pm
- SF Tue 13 Dec, 7pm
- **France v Poland** – Sun 4 Dec, 3pm
- **England v Senegal** – Sun 4 Dec, 7pm
- QF Sat 10 Dec, 7pm
- **Morocco v Spain** – Tue 6 Dec, 3pm
- **1H v 2G** – Tue 6 Dec, 7pm
- QF Sat 10 Dec, 3pm
- SF Wed 14 Dec, 7pm
- **Final** Sun 18 Dec, 3pm

World Cup In brief

World Cup

Three-team groups may be ditched for 2026

World Cup organisers are increasingly open to discarding the new three-team group format for the 2026 tournament in the US, Mexico and Canada. It comes after concerns that too many dead rubbers in the last round of matches could dilute the expanded, 48-team event. Although Fifa's official position remains unaltered, multiple sources say there have been "informal talks" and "corridor chats" in Doha about the benefits of going with 12 groups of four teams rather than 16 groups of three. That could lead to a 104-game World Cup - 40 more than in Qatar - if the top two in each group, plus the best eight third-placed sides, go through to a 32-team knockout stage. Nothing has been decided and stakeholders are expected to talk more formally about a potential switch in the coming months. Any decision would have to be taken next year. One well-placed observer said that if the tournament were extended by a few days to fit in more matches then neither Fifa nor the major sponsors would likely object. They pointed to the vast extra revenue that would be generated through ticket sales and concessions. However, such a move would risk a conflict with clubs and players' unions given the sensitivities around the increasingly busy calendar and the likelihood of the best teams having to play eight matches, not seven. **Sean Ingle**

Netherlands

De Roon admits gloom but eyes up progress

The Netherlands again admitted they had yet to impress, but their midfielder Marten de Roon said he and his team mates were searching for a solution before tomorrow's last 16 game against the USA. The Dutch topped Group A but they have been criticised for failing to play with any conviction in their three games - victories over Senegal and Qatar and a fortunate draw against Ecuador. "We are searching, that is clear. We hope it gets better, we all hope so," De Roon said. "But the first goal is to get through to the next round. We are not deliberately playing badly." **Reuters**

USA

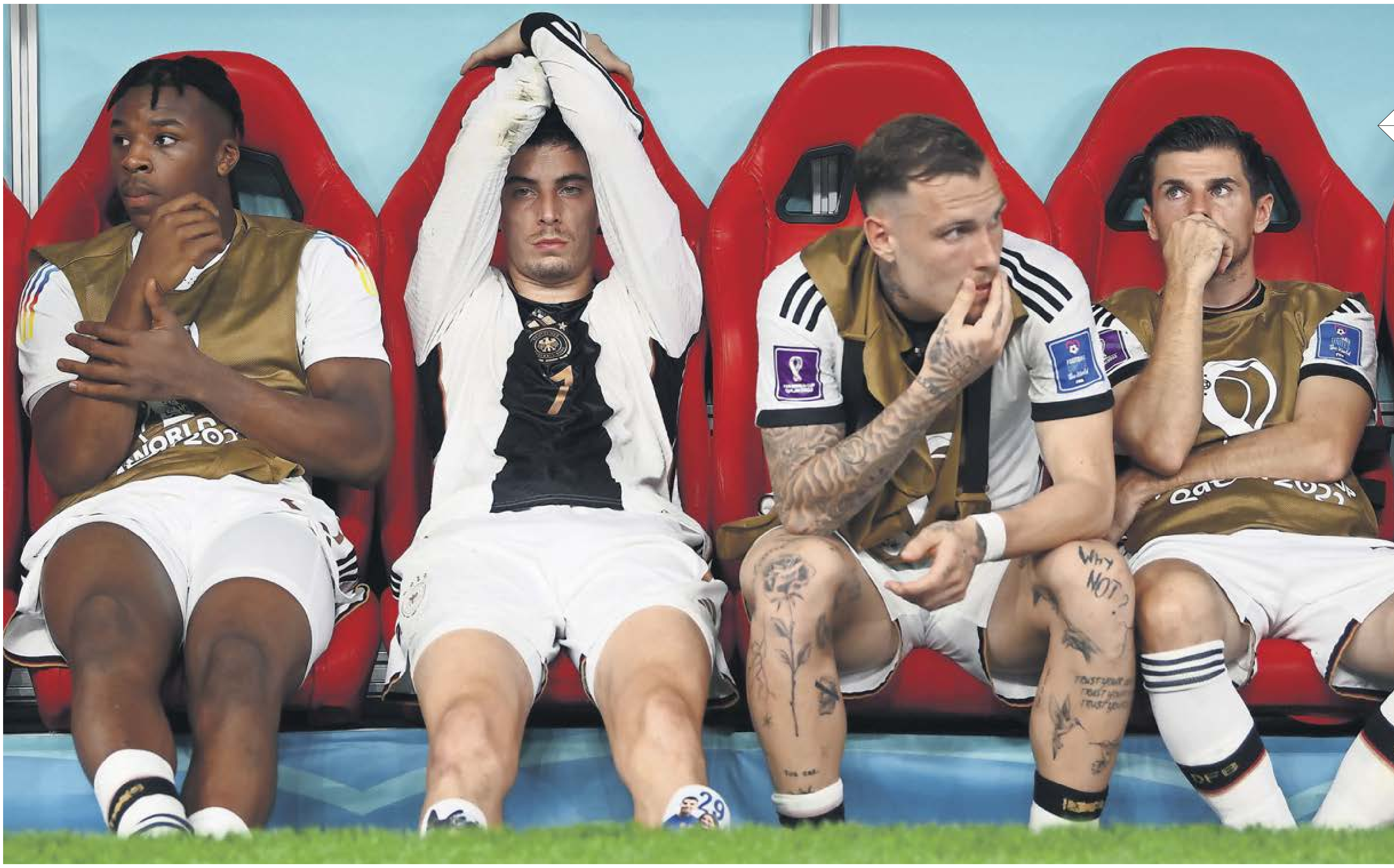
Pulisic battling to play against Netherlands

Having scored the winning goal for the USA against Iran, Christian Pulisic watched the final minutes from a hospital on a mobile phone. "They were checking my blood sugar and everything and it was flying through the roof," he said. "But it wasn't because of anything. It was just me stressed watching the game. But once I got through that and the final whistle blew, I was obviously very happy." Pulisic hopes to play against the Netherlands tomorrow after bruising his pelvic bone in a collision with the Iran goalkeeper, Alireza Beiranvand, while scoring in the 1-0 win on Tuesday. "I will do everything in my power to work with this medical team and make sure that I can play," he said. **AP**

Qatar Beyond the football

This is a World Cup like no other. For the last 12 years the Guardian has been reporting on the issues surrounding Qatar 2022, from corruption and human rights abuses to the treatment of migrant workers and discriminatory laws. The best of our journalism is gathered on our dedicated Qatar: Beyond the Football home page for those who want to go deeper into the issues beyond the pitch.
theguardian.com/news/series/qatar-beyond-the-football





Havertz hangs head in despair

Goalscorer Kai Havertz and the Germany bench look dejected as they crash out of the World Cup
SHAUN BOTTERILL/FIFA VIA GETTY

Germany shattered after Havertz secures comeback win in vain

Costa Rica	**2**
Tejeda 58, Vargas 70	
Germany	**4**
Gnabry 10, Havertz 73 85, Füllkrug 89	

	Costa Rica	Germany
Possession	31%	69%
Shots on target	6	11
Fouls	3	8

Barney Ronay
Al Bayt Stadium

There was an added note of pain for Germany in the tone, the pitch, the basic jauntiness of Costa Rica's designated goal music, a taunting blast of trumpets and maracas, the kind of thing that gets played on a particularly cruel TV gameshow as the bucket of gunge upends itself over the dunce's booth.

Germany did manage something novel at Al Bayt Stadium, exiting the World Cup at the earliest stage despite winning this game 4-2. They spent most of it in, then out; and even witnessed an extraordinary period where it seemed Costa Rica, who played with real heart, were going through instead. With 48 minutes gone Hansi Flick's team had been bossing this Group E endgame, eyes still fixed on the horizon towards the last 16 of Qatar 2022. Elsewhere in the Doha orbit zone Spain were 1-0 up.

The German campaign had been weird, marked by Antonio Rüdiger's mocking knees-high run, and then the Füllkrug interlude, where a man who could actually score a goal briefly became a kind of Teutonic folk saviour. But this felt like a kind of safety.

At which point semi-disaster struck. Japan equalised at the Khalifa International Stadium. Germany now had to recrank the engines, score again and hope for a Spanish revival. But now outright disaster struck as Japan went 2-1 up and suddenly Germany were freewheeling towards the exit doors. This had become a ghost game, dead football, a night of second-screening.

Germany did need a just-in-case goal, needed to win by two, to play like this was still there. They did the opposite. A large channel of space opened down the right. Costa Rica surged through, Keysher Fuller crossing, Manuel Neuer saving the first header and Yeltsin Tejeda burying the rebound.

Flick slumped deep in his padded chair, eyes bulging. And now the night brought a genuine plot twist. Briefly this stopped being a Germany story and became a Costa Rica one. The second *Ticos* goal was farcical, all flailing legs, the ball bundled home off Neuer. A goal to the good, Costa Rica stood on the verge of pub quiz immortality, set to edge ahead in their final group game of a team that had beaten them 7-0 in their first.

But wait. What was this? More madness. Germany equalised! 2-2. Where are we? Kai Havertz had equalised. There were 17 minutes to go at this stage. How many more worlds, how many alternate universes would we need to absorb?

Group E has been a weird kind of torture for Germany. This was something new, five goals, a wild inversion of emotions and a mutual assured footballing destruction, with both teams here now going out. Niclas Füllkrug had already been summoned to add muscle and vibes to the attack. The sublime Jamal Musiala



▲ *Yeltsin Tejeda celebrates his strike as Costa Rica peg back Germany*

twice hit a post, playing a different game for a different Germany team.

Havertz made it 3-2. Pointlessly Germany got to their two-goal cushion, Füllkrug scoring after a wild, hallucinogenic VAR delay during which the stadium seemed to melt and ooze through the floor. Germany had done Spain a solid here by seeing off the surging *Ticos*. Any chance of returning the favour?

It wasn't to be. All four teams had entered this final round able to go through or go out. All four had revolved like a formal dance over 90 minutes. This was World Cup group final match day as free-form jazz flute solo , and a great advert for the four-team format just as Fifa contemplates tearing it up to inflict pre-match penalty shootouts and other three-team inanity for the next bloated edition.

At kick-off Germany needed to win and hope Spain beat Japan. Costa Rica needed to win and hope Japan beat Spain. Or Germany could just say hang it all and try to win 9-0. Flick did go for broke in a way, with Thomas Müller starting ahead of Musiala plus the twin man-bun speedsters Leroy Sané and Serge Gnabry.

And Al Bayt felt like a fitting last-chance saloon, a stadium with an air of the one-horse desert town, the clock ticking around closer to midnight. Musiala was sublime early on, coming on like a miraculous human pond-skater, gliding through the red shirts, making the game throb and buzz with possibilities.

The opening goal came from his side, David Raum crossing for Gnabry to head in. Spain had also gone one up against Japan. For a while nothing much happened. Al Bayt waited, awkwardly for time to pass. It came in a rush.

At the end a dejected Flick spoke about the need to spend the next 10 years overhauling the youth system (hasn't this happened?). Something will have to change, because this is now the worst German World Cup era in the history of German World Cup eras. West or unified, Germany have failed to get out of a first-round stage only twice in 16 men's World Cups. This one and the last one.

Has there been a greater recent footballing chimera than that 2014 triumph, which was hailed at the time as the birth of some German machine-football uber-generation all set to dominate for the next decade. Germany's golden crop, Das (borrowed, Spanish) Reboot has turned out to be something else. So often what we see as just the start of an era is instead its high point, the wave not gathering strength but breaking. For all Flick's urgent talk of starting again, this felt like the end of something.

Costa Rica
5-4-1
Navas; Fuller (Bennette 74), Duarte●, Watson, Vargas, Oviedo (Contreras 90); Campbell, Borges, Tejeda (Wilson 90), Aguilera (Salas ht); Venegas (Matarrita 74)

Germany
4-2-3-1
Neuer; Kimmich, Süle (Ginter 90), Rüdiger, Raum (Götze 67); Goretzka (Klostermann ht), Gündogan (Füllkrug 55); Sané, Musiala, Gnabry; Müller (Havertz 67)

Referee Stéphanie Frappart (Fr) **Attendance** 67,054

Analysis
Jonathan Liew *Al Bayt Stadium*



Flick probably pays for this debacle with his job – and no complaints

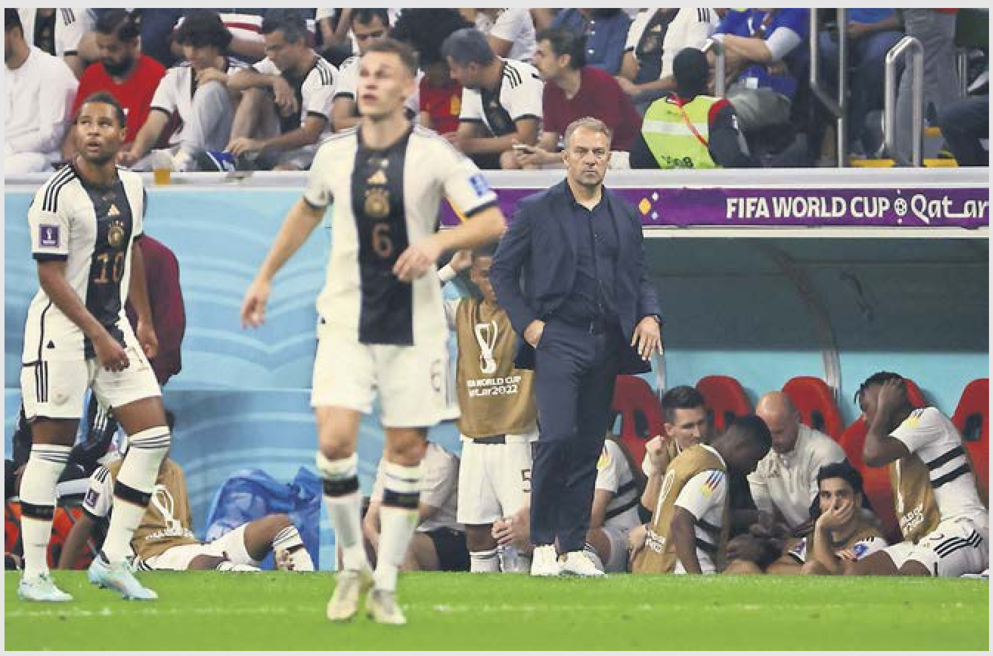
Everything is connected. A whistle blows in Doha and within fractions of seconds, via a lattice of mobile phone networks and whispers and nudges, its sound has somehow travelled the 30 miles to Al Khor. And the cheer around the stadium gives the game away, and on the Germany bench Hansi Flick senses a change in the air, and he takes a look around, and he glances at his bench, and he knows, he just knows. He turns back to face the pitch. But his hands are in his pockets, and his thoughts are elsewhere.

Everything is connected. A World Cup group stage consists not simply of three discrete games but one cogent narrative, and if you don't pay attention at the start you may well miss something that you need later. Here Germany loaded all their usual programmes, moved the ball with pace, did their jobs, scored four goals. But although they didn't know it yet, none of it was any use to them. The game had already gone, and it had gone in eight wild minutes against Japan at the Khalifa International Stadium nine days earlier.

The great German sides could raise their game to suit the occasion, do whatever it took, squeeze every last drop out of their resources and system. Everyone does their job, and you win. For better and for worse, this team feel like its polar opposite. And so the problem comes when you combine the classic German mentality with a modern style of football that demands perpetual intensity, that needs every part of the machine to be 100% switched on at all times.

This game, as futile as it proved, was ample evidence of this. Germany were utterly dominant in the opening minutes and yet had just a single goal to show for it. Meanwhile Costa Rica went up the other end and scored twice in 12 chaotic minutes as the gloomy news filtered through from Doha and Germany allowed their minds to drift. Flick had withdrawn Ilkay Gündogan and Leon Goretzka in an attempt to engineer greater attacking thrust but in so doing had hollowed out his midfield and left Germany vulnerable to the counter. Everything is connected.

Kai Havertz came on and burgled two sharp goals; Niclas Füllkrug added a fourth with a classic poacher's finish. Germany had saved Spain but they were powerless to save themselves.



◀ *A stony-faced Hansi Flick watches as his side battle to an ultimately futile victory against Costa Rica. He may pay for Germany's early exit with his job*
WOLFGANG RATTAY/REUTERS

There was, perhaps, a bitter symmetry in the scoreline. Germany 4-2 Costa Rica: the first game of the 2006 World Cup in Munich, the game that brought the curtain up on Germany's summer of love, unleashed a wave of footballing fervour that would carry them to a World Cup win in 2014 and a decade of golden memories. Now, ironically, the music has stopped on the very same chord.

And so the postmortems can begin, the fingers can be pointed, the scapegoats sought. Flick may just pay for this debacle with his job, although the smart money is on him being given one more crack. There is, after all, talent to be mined here. Havertz, the wonderful Jamal Musiala, the teenage Dortmund striker Youssoufa Moukoko, the marvellous Leverkusen playmaker Florian Wirtz: technical players, modern players, players a good coach can build a team around.

Meanwhile others will fall by the wayside. Thomas Müller has hinted at retirement. Manuel Neuer and Gündogan may go too. Mario Götze has surely played his last tournament. There is a tactical blueprint, a base to build from, a home Euros in 2024 to work towards. German football has often prided itself on its composure, its refusal to press the panic button, its refusal even to acknowledge the existence of a panic button. Even after a third successive tournament failure it is possible to spin an enthusiastic yarn around this team, paint this setback as the inevitable collateral damage of a longer reinvention.

Yet it is impossible to shake the feeling that something essential has been lost here, too. Everything is connected. The grounds for German optimism are also the grounds for pessimism. The technical qualities of the new generation have come at a price: a lack of defensive rigour, a chronic absence of genuine strikers, an inability to capitalise on dominance or see out the tough periods, a naivete that at times has strayed into the realm of complacency.

These are not bad players. But for too long they have lacked direction. Germany brought just a few thousand fans out to Qatar. The indifference back home is palpable. Since Euro 2016 they have been behind in every single tournament game they have played. And by 2026 it will be 12 years since they last reached the knockout stages of the World Cup. Everything is connected. And here, the four-time world champions learned that lesson in the cruellest of fashions.

Frappart makes history to put women to the fore

The French referee shows that females have a place in football despite Qatar's draconian treatment of them

Suzanne Wrack

It is perhaps the biggest testament to the quality of the performance of French referee Stéphanie Frappart and her assistants Neuza Back of Brazil and Mexico's Karen Díaz, that the coverage of such a historic men's World Cup moment was muted to brief mentions.

In taking charge for Germany's showdown with Costa Rica in the final round of games in Group E, Frappart became the first woman to officiate in a men's World Cup and it felt decidedly normal.

Frappart is used to making history: she was the first woman to referee in men's Ligue 2, then Ligue 1 in France and the first woman to referee in the Champions League and Uefa Super Cup.

As a result, she is also used to the noise that comes with it. Amid the overwhelmingly positive response to the appointment of Frappart and her assistants, with many finding it an antidote to a tournament mired in controversy, were the same tired refrains: "The way the woman referee runs is hilarious. I can't watch the game without cringing," tweeted one viewer. "I'm all in favour of having a female referee. In fact I think there should be more!" added another with a winking face and fire emojis. "I'm in love! I mean, she's a great referee!," said another.

Except these were exceptions, with more trending time dedicated to the performance of Victor Gomes, the referee in the other match between Spain and Japan as the teams thrillingly pinballed up and down the table.

In many respects the presence of Frappart mattered so much more than the performance.

There has been much, very justified, criticism of the decision to host the World Cup in a country that criminalises same-sex relationships and where LGBTQ+ people have fewer rights, where women's rights are hugely restricted and in stadiums built on the bodies of migrant workers.

A key narrative of this tournament to date has been of suppression of support for even the most basic of human rights and any shows of solidarity with those affected.

From the OneLove armband debacle to the initial removal of all rainbow flag-related clothing by stadium security, the attempt to depoliticise the tournament has been fierce.

Fifa's decision, then, to appoint a team of referees made up of only women to take charge of Germany v Costa Rica bucked the trend of a tournament bowing to the pressure of its hosts.

In a country where Qatari women are forced to obtain permission from a male guardian to marry, work, travel abroad, study and more, three women warmed up in Al Bayt Stadium ready to make history in the middle of the action in a country that would likely not allow them to do what they do were they Qatari.



Stéphanie Frappart is the first woman to referee at a men's World Cup

There have been women journalists and broadcasters in the press boxes and studios during this tournament, but they will only be seen on screens in the countries of those broadcasters, in countries where having a woman on screen is increasingly normal (if not widely appreciated still). But those women will not be on the screens of host broadcasters in countries that do not believe they should be. Having Frappart standing in the middle of the pitch of the world's biggest sporting tournament put a woman unavoidably centre stage. It put a woman into every room of every person watching. It told viewers that women have a place in football, that they have authority and they can be athletic. Of course, there will be attempts to not show the referee and her assistants in their short sleeved shirts and shorts, as Iran's state broadcaster has done for a number of years, but it is far harder to cut away from the referee than from women fans in the crowd.

Red Devils in the dump
Lukaku misfires badly as blunt Belgium crash out *Page 44→*

Atlas Lions lead the pack
Ziyech and En-Nesyri send Morocco into last 16 *Page 45→*



'I'm not sorry'
Suárez refuses to apologise for handball before grudge game with Ghana
Page 40→

The Guardian
Friday 2 December 2022

Sport



World Cup 2022

End of the World

Angry Flick calls for Germany reboot after Japan spring surprise

▲ *David Raum sums up the despairing mood after Germany's early World Cup exit, despite beating Costa Rica 4-2*
THAIER AL-SUDANI/REUTERS

Barney Ronay
Al Bayt Stadium

Hansi Flick said Germany had "fulfilled our duty" after exiting the World Cup at the earliest stage despite a chaotic 4-2 victory against Costa Rica.

Germany's fate at this World Cup had been set by their opening game against Japan, where they had 26 shots but still lost to the eventual group winners. For Flick this was a symptom of a much wider malaise that speaks to the need for another reboot of the entire German coaching structure. "I don't care about different teams, it is all up to us," he said. "If you look at the matches and number of goals, it is our fault. I am convinced we had sufficient chances and possibilities against Japan in the first half and also against Spain, you have to use your chances. It would have been a different situation.

"There were a lot of individual mistakes and they make me very angry.



▲ *Kaoru Mitoma's controversial assist helped Japan beat Spain 2-1*

The first half made me very upset and I told the team I was upset."

In a significant turn, there was a nod to England and Spain as examples of state-of-the-art coaching methods. "I believe that for the future of German football we also need to do things differently with training. For years we have been talking about new goalkeepers, new wing-backs, what was always good in German football was we were able to defend well.

"We need the basics. Spain is very good in the defence and they focus on training of young players. I think for the future and the next 10 years it will be very important to focus on the new generation of footballers."

Jamal Musiala, in Chelsea's academy till he was 16, was a lone star in this campaign, although Flick also noted pointedly that his development had taken place elsewhere. "It is difficult after such a match to single out one player but Jamal and what he showed today, it is unfortunate such a player cannot continue to play in the tournament. Jamal has been trained in England, not Germany."

Japan progressed as group winners after a 2-1 comeback victory over Spain, which included a controversial winner. Ao Tanaka scored Japan's second goal after VAR ruled the ball had not gone out of play before Kaoru Mitoma crossed from the byline although to the naked eye, it appeared to be a dubious decision.

Reports and analysis *Pages 46-49 →*

Crawley wants more after England score 506 in a day

Ali Martin
Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium

Zak Crawley rather summed up the carnage that he and three fellow centurions had just unleashed, ending a record-breaking opening day for England in Pakistan by saying the team was targeting a first-innings score of 1,000.

After lighting the touch paper on his side's 506 for four from 75 overs with 122 from 111 balls, the opener quickly stressed this was in jest; the way England are going about their Test cricket under Ben Stokes and Brendon McCullum, it wasn't a given.

Crawley said: "Hopefully we can go again, get a big one and get a thousand - I'm joking. We're never really looking to score quickly, we just want to be positive. If they bowl 100 balls in a good spot, then we'll block 100 balls. But if we get an opportunity to score, we'll score."

Score they did, Crawley's third Test hundred followed by similarly rapid centuries for Ben Duckett (107), Ollie Pope (108) and Harry Brook (101no). The run-rate topped six an over, England surpassed an all-time opening-day record of 494 for six that had stood for 111 years and the virus that swept through the camp and put the start of the match in doubt was a distant memory.

Asked if this rebooted side was trying to reinvent the way Test cricket is played, Crawley said: "We're certainly trying to change the way we used to play because we weren't getting a lot of success doing that."

On his reprieve after overturning an lbw decision on 99, Crawley said: "I thought I was out but Ducky knew it was missing. It was an unbelievable feeling and made the hundred more special." Duckett, with whom he shared a 233-run opening stand, said: "I think if it was hitting middle halfway up I would have told him to review it anyway."

Ali Martin's report *Page 38 →*



▲ *Zak Crawley scored 122 from 111 balls in England's total of 506 for four*

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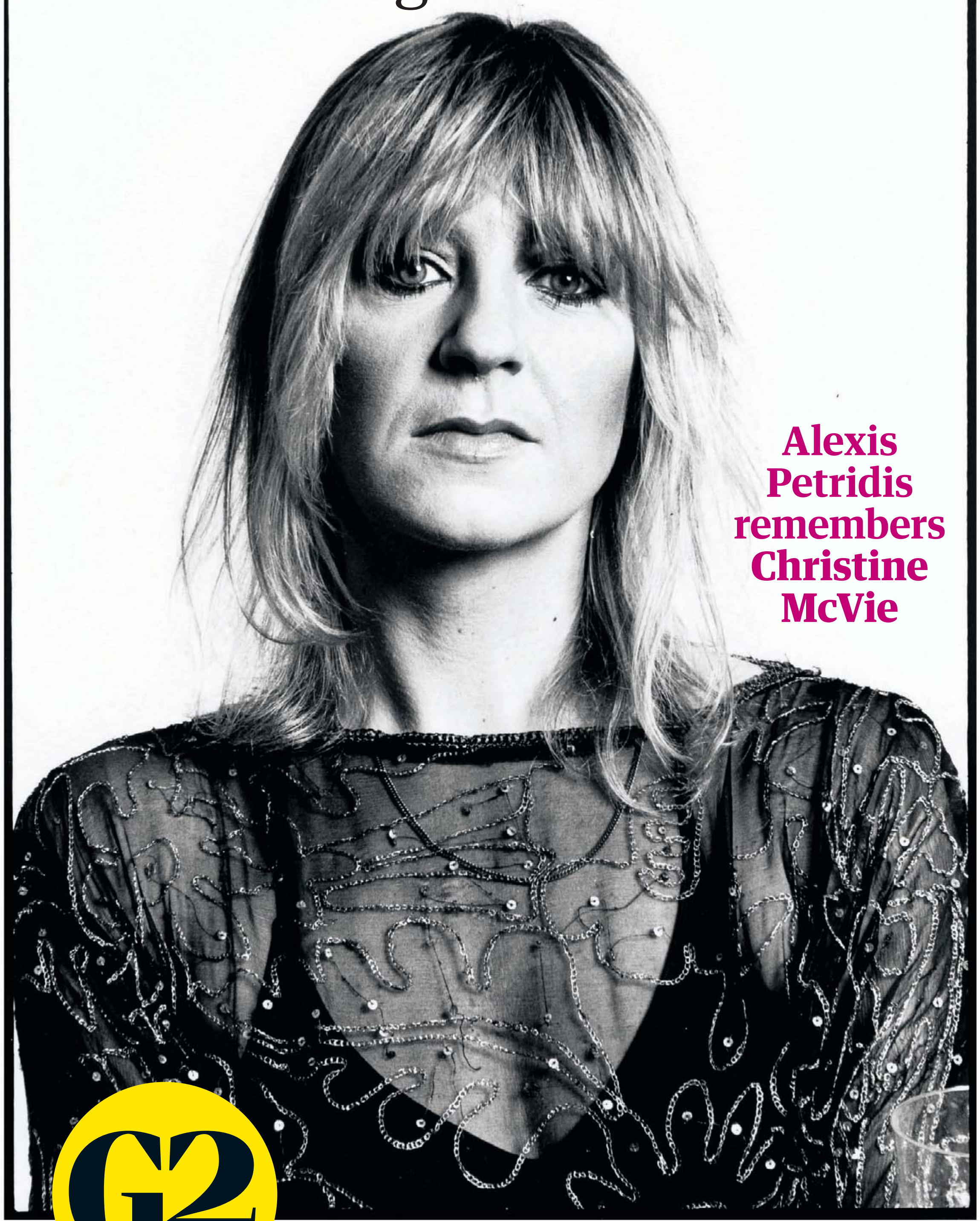
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‘She seemed at one remove from Fleetwood Mac’s madness while being in the thick of it



Alexis Petridis remembers Christine McVie

The Guardian

G2

Friday 02/12/22

Film & Music

As it was
Musicians on the year in pop
page 10

Samatha Morton
‘I was owned by the state’
page 3



Ranked! Girls Aloud songs

Twenty years since their debut hit, Alexis Petridis rates the ITV talent show winners' greatest tracks



1
Biology *(2005)*
Biology sounds even more remarkable 17 years into a more straitened era of algorithm-tailored pop than it did in 2005: dispensing with standard verse-chorus structure, it leaps from an intro that samples the Animals' Club A-Go-Go, to a synth-heavy verse that builds to what sounds like the chorus, but isn't. One of the best pop singles of the past 20 years.

2
Love Machine *(2004)*
Certain Girls Aloud members apparently thought Love Machine was "career suicide" – a rockabilly-influenced single? – but it was the making of them, at least as avatars for an original approach to making hits: a manufactured pop band who did things manufactured pop bands weren't supposed to do.

3
Something Kinda Ooooh *(2006)*
The best Girls Aloud singles often sound like someone had a mad idea about pop music in the pub – in this case: what would a relentless hi-NRG track sound like with glam guitars over the top of it? – then went home and set about making it happen. The results are deliriously exciting.

4
Call the Shots *(2007)*
The supreme example of a Girls Aloud track where Xenomania dialled down their eccentricities and just came up with a preposterously hook-laden melody, Call the Shots' synth-soaked sound is noticeably more straightforward than that of their more out-there singles.

5
The Show *(2004)*
The lead single from a second album that nearly didn't happen – their record label were threatening to pull the plug, assuming their success would be short-lived – The Show is a triumph: rave synths behind lyrics that sharply reflect on a failed relationship.

6
No Good Advice *(2003)*
My Sharona bass line, monster chorus, guitar apparently nodding in the direction of the Ruts' Babylon's Burning, lyrics noticeably more screw-you ("a finger to the world below … I'm already wasted") than you might expect from a band created on prime-time ITV: clearly Sound of the Underground wasn't a one-off.

7
Sound of the Underground *(2002)*
With hindsight, it was clear that Girls Aloud were different to most TV talent show winners, who sailed to No 1 with a big ballad or an obvious cover; Girls Aloud's debut instead was a fizzing cocktail of drum'n'bass and surf guitar, with an impressively provocative title from a manufactured pop band.

8
Swinging London Town *(2005)*
Another of Chemistry's vicious pen portraits of 00s pop culture, with "price-tag starlets" "full of gear" ("gear, gear, gear, gear", it repeats, lest anyone miss the druggy point): "We're down the slide to rehab and all of it's for free." The music is a furious chatter of distorted synths and squelching acid lines.

9
Can't Speak French *(2008)*
On the one hand, Can't Speak French is the de rigueur 90s/00s girl band homage to 60s soul. On the other, its production feels too supercharged to count as mere pastiche, and the melody is just fantastic. Brilliantly, given the title, they also did a version in French.

10
The Promise *(2005)*
"They were ready to sell a million albums immediately," Xenomania's Brian Higgins noted of the final Girls Aloud album. "They needed something to hit you between the eyes." Which is what the gorgeous Phil Spector-influenced The Promise – a No 1 – delivers.

See full list of 20 at theguardian.com/music

Playlist



1 **Jen Cloher**
Being Human
"I got paid on Gadigal land … All my opportunity a genocidal legacy," sings the antipodean Patti Smith, advocating for the return of stolen land and letting go "of what you think you know".

2 **Pinkpantheress**
Boy's a Liar
Sage wisdom over a sprightly chiptune beat: men are dogs, he's lying to you, dump him etc. The whole thing crackles with distortion, like it was recorded over an unearthed 90s cassette.

3 **Molly Tuttle and Golden Highway**
Nashville Mess Around
Bluegrass don Molly Tuttle gives the festive banjo a thorough workout on her celebration of dodging debt and gatekeepers in Music City to party against the odds.

4 **Pnau**
You Know What I Need ft Troye Sivan
An Australian summer smash, delivered seven months too early for the northern hemisphere – elegant poolside pop to take you into the wee hours.

5 **Equal Parts**
A Crisis
Driving, skronky punk with "post-Dry Cleaning" quotidian spoken-word lyrics. The song's frantic countenance and tweaked-out guitar work takes it beyond imitation into a seamier realm.

6 **Kadhja Bonet**
Little Christmas Tree
The soulful LA guitarist does a festive EP in her inimitably liquid style: this highlight suggests what it's like to spend the season in balmy California, pickled in eggnog.

7 **The Martinez Brothers and Tokischa**
Kilo
Firebrand Dominican MC Tokischa heats up this grimy Balearic track with her trademark quickfire-but-lackadaisical vocals, yelped as if recorded in the centre of the dancefloor.

PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MACLEOD/THE GUARDIAN
COVER PHOTOGRAPH: ALAMY

The reader interview

'I was somehow given the toolkit to survive'

Samantha Morton

on growing up in care, her dream dinner party and the time Robbie Coltrane paid for her curry



PHOTOGRAPH: SARAH DUNN

Does being famous make people happy? *Edricom*
I don't feel famous at all, unless I'm in New York or Los Angeles. Then people come up and say nice things and ask me for autographs in a very, very respectful way, and it feels so nice to be remembered. Maybe that's ego and pride, but I like that. I remember when I was about 16 and I did Band of Gold. It was watched by more than 21 million people every Sunday and I couldn't walk down the street. People would stop me and say stuff and I was so frightened and I hated it. I had just been offered the part of Tina Dingle on Emmerdale Farm and I said I couldn't do it, because of how it felt on Band of Gold. My stepdad, Frank, was furious because he loved Emmerdale.

It's a mixed bag. You want to be recognised for your work, but then you want to have a normal life. And I think having children changes how you feel because you want to protect them.

I saw you making soup once, during a visit from Kathy Burke on her Channel 4 series. The soup looked delicious – who would your dream dinner guests be (aside from lovely Kathy)? *mountain_thyme*
Marina Abramović and Tracey Emin. I really like Anna Jones's cookery writing so I would probably cook something veggie and super clean but very, very tasty. I like doing a lot of pickles. I hit my 40s and started to love puddings so I'd probably make a very decadent brioche bread-and-butter-pudding.

What advice would you give to a foster mum? *Curiosa, hopeloverage*
First of all, try to show love. What hurt me when I was younger was being separated as the foster child. I wasn't included in family photographs or family dos, or they went on holidays and left me behind. Try to get support to make the child feel part of the family as much as possible, which isn't always easy financially if you've got your own kids and only get a little bit from the council for your foster child.

Also don't tell everyone all the time: "Oh, this is my foster child." I really liked it when we'd have a little fib that I was, say, a cousin's cousin. So I felt that I belonged.

What do you think the treatment of children – especially in care or those who are vulnerable – tells us about our society? *gavernism*
Somebody posted an image on Twitter the other day of how many politicians were in parliament for a debate on the Care Act. There was nobody there. I think that it comes from the top. We need our politicians to listen to doctors and social workers and teachers, and look at how broken this country is. The most vulnerable people in society are children and young people, and because they don't get a vote, they are just disregarded.

Have you met a politician who said they understood the value of art but then voted to shaft the vulnerable? *AndrewReeve*
No. The last time I had anything to do with government was after I made my film The Unloved (2009), about a character who goes into care, and Ed Balls [the then children's secretary] invited me to talk to him and then asked me to be a children's tsar. I took that role very, very seriously. He really took it seriously. And I was incredibly proud of what Labour did then in regards to a huge initiative to recruit more social workers and provide better funding. I think since the coalition, the government has done nothing but decimate children's services. Anything that makes life better for children, they have actively sought to destroy.

> "My stepdad was furious when I turned down Tina Dingle in Emmerdale because he loved it

We have been failed miserably in regards to young people and culture and healthcare and national security. We need a general election now. We need to fight. I cannot get my head around the lack of integrity. It's just so bad and it's going to get a lot worse. It will get better when a different government gets in but they're going to inherit an absolute mess. Carnage.

Do you have any memories of acting with Robbie Coltrane in Cracker? *Spaggy_McGee*
He was amazing and kind and funny. We all went for dinner at a Balti restaurant in Manchester after we'd finished filming. I had the money I'd been paid that day – about £10 – and I only ordered what cost £10. I was only a kid, so I didn't drink any wine or anything.

But at the end they split the bill and I was mortified. It was like £20 each. And Robbie looked at me and he just knew. And he said: "I got you." He paid for my dinner in the most amazing way. He was the best to work with. It was such a tough role and I couldn't have been in safer hands, really. He made all these jokes as well. I was like: "Oh, this is great. You can do something really heavy and you can have a laugh at the same time."

What does acting mean to you? *Gavernism*
Life and breath and knowledge and learning and appetite and freedom and joy and privilege and luck. Everything.

Is it strange to have so many people know your story? How do you protect your privacy while also allowing yourself to be, at times, very vulnerable? *bookholm2*
I made a choice to share my story because if I didn't, I wouldn't be able to make a change. I believe certain things happened to me so that I could make a difference. I was somehow given the toolkit to survive. I do have privacy, though. I don't really talk about my family and children and husband. But I feel my childhood is certainly up for public scrutiny and conversation because I was a child of the state.

If you were to imagine a vocation other than acting – what would it be, and why? *bunnyla*
I keep thinking I want to go into politics, but I hate a lot of what politics stands for. So I'm really confused. I have lots of things that I want to change. So more time for political activism. Would I stand as an MP? I really don't know, but it's a conversation I've had with my husband many, many times.

Do you ever get tired of serious questions and want to be asked about your hair, shoes and scandalous lifestyle? *bookholm2*
Nah, I love being asked serious questions.
As told to Catherine Shoard
She Said is on release and The Whale is out in the UK on 3 February 2023. Morton will receive the Richard Harris Award for outstanding contribution to British film at the British Independent Film Awards on Sunday.

Send us your questions for next week's interviewee
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Distinctive melancholy ... McVie in the studio in 1975

Be with you everywhere

The late Christine McVie was the still point at the heart of Fleetwood Mac's hurricane – and through the turmoil, she wrote some of their most beautiful, bittersweet songs. **Alexis Petridis** pays tribute

According to a handwritten note Stevie Nicks posted on social media on Wednesday, Christine McVie's bandmates in Fleetwood Mac hadn't even known she was ill until a few days before her death. "I wanted to be in London; I wanted to get to London," Nicks lamented. "But I was told to wait."

It's a sad story, but it somehow seems very Christine McVie. She gave every impression of being unfailingly modest and understated while playing a vital role in one of the most successful rock bands in history, maintaining a clear-eyed view of their strengths and failings: she bluntly dismissed the last two albums she made with the band, 1990's Behind the Mask and 1995's Time, as "terrible". She appeared to sail through the soap opera that was Fleetwood Mac in the mid- to late 70s – a broiling mass of failed personal relationships, cocaine-fulled egotism and excess – with such a degree of equanimity that Nicks took to calling her Mother Earth. Somehow, she pulled off the feat of seeming to be at one remove from the band's madness while being in the thick of it.



Fleetwood Mac in the late 1980s

On 1977's 45m-selling Rumours, while Nicks and her former partner Lindsey Buckingham wrote one entertainingly bitter song after another about their collapsed partnership, McVie came up with Don't Stop, exhorting her ex-husband, bassist John McVie, to look on the bright side of their recent divorce. You could argue that was easy for her to say, given that she wasn't the one

Continued on page 6 →

PHOTOGRAPHS: FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS; PICTORIAL PRESS/ALAMY

← Continued from page 5

who had to stand on stage every night listening to their ex sing a paean to their new partner (McVie's You Make Loving Fun). But still, the song suggested its author had a noticeably different temperament to the people who wrote Dreams or Go Your Own Way. "It was never as melodramatic as Stevie and Lindsey," she later reflected.

Perhaps it's more accurate to say that McVie remained an oddly enigmatic character, even after decades in the spotlight. Behind the self-deprecation and the gorgeous tenderness of her vocals, she must have been quite steely. It can't have been easy to establish yourself as a woman in the testosterone-heavy world of Britain's late-60s blues revival, but Christine Perfect, as she was then, managed it. When she won Melody Maker magazine's female singer of the year award in 1969, she pointed out that she wasn't overburdened with competition: "There was really only Julie Driscoll, Sandy Denny and me at that point - there were no other women."

It was a typically self-effacing comment that nevertheless told you a lot about the environment in which she first made her mark. She had already played in a blues band at art college when one of its ex-members invited her to jack in her career as a window-dresser and join his new band, Chicken Shack, in 1967. Although she later said she didn't know what she was doing - "it didn't come naturally and I didn't have any belief in myself" - she contributed a handful of songs to their first two albums, 1968's 40 Blue Fingers Freshly Packed and Ready to Serve and 1969's OK Ken?, and sang lead vocals on their biggest hit, a lambent cover of Etta James's I'd Rather Go Blind, on which she boldly declined to disguise her English accent.

Moreover, she seemed to have her own unique songwriting style in place from the start. Listen to 1968's When the Train Comes Back, the first released song for which she received a solo writing credit. It's very much written in the blues idiom - "you got 20 other women and you know another wouldn't do" - but anyone familiar with Rumours or Tusk would find something oddly familiar about it: there's a bittersweet melancholy to its melody that feels distinctly McVie. It's the same with Wait and See, from her 1970 solo album Christine Perfect, which she subsequently dismissed as "pretty rum". It's not too much of a mental leap to imagine it slotting on to a mid-70s Fleetwood Mac album, differently arranged and produced: if it wouldn't be a highlight, nor would it be wildly out of place.

The sense that, contrary to her protestations, McVie knew what she was doing was heightened when she became a member of Fleetwood Mac. The band seem to have asked her to join purely out of necessity. She attended the sessions for 1970's Kiln House in her capacity as John McVie's new wife, fulfilling the role that rock stars' wives tended to fulfil in the era - "doodling, cooking and smoking a lot of pot," as she put it - but Fleetwood Mac were clearly struggling without their former leader, Peter Green, and McVie happened to be on hand. She made an immediate impact, not least because she appeared to have worked out where their musical future would lie long before anyone else did.

Fleetwood Mac's early-70s albums were a mixed bag - the sound of a band not entirely certain what to do next. But whenever McVie takes over the songwriting, you can make out Rumours in embryo form. Tellingly, 1972's Spare Me a Little of Your Love remained in their live set long after Nicks and Buckingham had joined the band. And it speaks to McVie's determination that she remained with Fleetwood Mac through these years of meagre sales, lineup changes and widespread lack of interest (a kind of nadir was reached on the 1974 release of Heroes Are Hard to Find, when their manager sent a fake version of the band to tour the US, claiming he owned their name). But perhaps she stuck it out because she could make out a potential destination.



Early days ... McVie in Chicken Shack

> **We laughed a lot, in between the bouts of melancholy and suicide**

Long before Fleetwood Mac decamped from the UK to Los Angeles, McVie's songs were touched by west coast sunlight. Popular wisdom and record sales might suggest that Buckingham and Nicks's recruitment revitalised the band, but it's worth noting that the songs that announced the arrival of Fleetwood Mac 2.0 were, depending on what country you lived in, Warm Ways or Over My Head - both examples of McVie doing what she had been doing for years: better produced, certainly, and benefiting from the gorgeous blend of voices that was McVie, Buckingham and Nicks singing in harmony, but still immediately identifiable as the work of the woman who had written Spare Me a Little of Your Love.

Just as McVie had been steadfast during the chaos of Fleetwood Mac's lean early 70s, so she was steadfast amid the personal turmoil that enveloped the group once sales took off. There was the bitter and seemingly unending fallout from Nicks and Buckingham's split; wild musical experimentation fuelled by a desire to keep up with the late-70s new wave movement; drug addiction so crippling that Nicks later claimed not to remember an entire four-month tour. But McVie reliably turned up to album sessions with a clutch of fantastic songs.

Her contributions to 1979's Tusk balance and anchor its more outre moments, whether they were implausibly soft and cosseting - Over and Over and Brown Eyes - or gently tethered to her blues roots, as on Think About Me. From 1982, Mirage is the least well-regarded album by the blockbuster iteration of Fleetwood Mac, but there's very little quibbling about the quality of McVie's Only Over You - a beautiful, careworn tribute to her ex-boyfriend, Beach Boy Dennis Wilson - or her stately album closer Wish You Were Here (written with Colin Allen). The sessions for 1987's Tango in the Night were, by all accounts, horrendous - Buckingham banished Nicks and Mick Fleetwood to a Winnebago parked outside the studio, horrified at the state they were in; John's drinking was so out of control he subsequently began suffering alcohol-related seizures - and yet McVie came up with the peerless Everywhere and Little Lies (co-written with Eddy Quintela), both multi-platinum singles.

The lineup of Fleetwood Mac that recorded Tango in the Night never made another album. Understandably dispirited by the subsequent Behind the Mask and Time, and keen to return to the UK, McVie left the band in 1998. She released a solo album, In the Meantime, in 2004, her first in 20 years, but she had never seemed terribly invested in a solo career. It was, she said, "not my bag at all, I like to be part of a group", although her writing never dipped below a certain standard.

Far better was her eponymous 2017 collaborative album with Lindsey Buckingham. Now that McVie was touring with Fleetwood Mac again - she rejoined in 2014 - the general belief was that the quality of the Buckingham-McVie album boded well for a full-scale reunion. But no: Buckingham was fired from the band, who continued touring with replacement members.

Earlier this year, McVie gave a handful of interviews to promote a collection of her solo work. She was as humble and understated as ever, doing her best to debunk at least some of the mythology around the band. "We laughed a lot," she offered drily, "in between the bouts of melancholy and suicide." She also flatly said she didn't miss being in Fleetwood Mac, or making music. Reading between the lines, you got the feeling that McVie was abundantly aware the music she had made was both impervious to changing fashion and vastly influential - in the tribute note she posted on Instagram, Nicks quoted some lyrics by Haim, just one of an array of younger artists audibly under their spell - and that she quite understandably thought she had achieved more than enough in that field. But, characteristically, she was too modest to say it out loud.

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'I would probably be delighted'... Christine McVie on rejoining the band

For fan **Tim Jonze**, interviewing the late musician was like a surreal dream. Better still was the privilege of hearing about her lifelong friendship with Stevie Nicks

It was strange enough being in Christine McVie's flat - high up and hovering over a stretch of the River Thames in Battersea with an upright piano in the corner of the room (oh, to be her neighbour). But it was stranger still hearing what she had to say. As we sat together on her light grey sofa in December 2013, McVie told me how she had left Fleetwood Mac in 1998 thinking that she wanted a quiet life in the Kent countryside with her dogs and Hunter wellies. But that hadn't been what she had wanted at all. Fifteen years on, McVie was restless, isolated, a little lonely … and wouldn't it be nice if she could be back playing with the band? "If they were to ask me, I would probably be very delighted," she ventured nervously.

What was I supposed to say to this? It seemed obvious to me that they would take her back in a flash. Earlier that year, Stevie Nicks had said she'd "beg, borrow and scrape together $5m and give it to her in cash if she would come back. That's how much I miss her!" And just two months before, McVie had even appeared on stage with Fleetwood Mac to thrill the crowd with a surprise encore of her hit Don't Stop.

Of course, it's eminently possible that this was all stage-managed by the band: ask McVie to sound reticent in front of a journalist in order to build the hype around her grand return. But this was also a genuinely dysfunctional band that revolved around the careful massaging of male egos. Communicating their deepest desires to each other via the press was equally likely. I think McVie was being genuine in her cautious approach, not just because I like to pretend I played a key role in getting the classic lineup of Fleetwood Mac back together, but because everything about her seemed genuine.


No pushovers … McVie with Stevie Nicks in 1977

When I told McVie how excited I was to meet her - a rare bit of fanboying that I would normally steer well clear of - she looked uncertain how to respond, a tad embarrassed. While Nicks, who I had met a few weeks earlier in Paris, had spoken fantastically about fate and celestial beings and communicating with her late mother through her jewellery, McVie told me tales about mastering blues bass lines with her left hand and how she supposed she must be "good with hooks". ("Oh, do you think so?" I had to hold myself back from replying to the woman who had written Say You Love Me, Over My Head, You Make Loving Fun, Songbird, Don't Stop, Over and Over, Hold Me, Little Lies and Everywhere.)

The difference between the two female members of the band played out in the music, too, where McVie, with her optimistic songs about falling head over heels in love and moving on from broken hearts, complemented Nicks's more mystical and poetic output. In a way, McVie was the McCartney to Nicks's Lennon; each was stronger for having the other by her side.

The same was true, I discovered, about them as people. It was a privilege to hear the story of their friendship, something that can get lost beneath the wreckage of the affairs and cocaine-fuelled rows that serve the Fleetwood Mac myth. Because what really kept the band afloat during their most tumultuous period was the bond that these two sisters of the moon shared from the moment they first met up - for Mexican food in 1974.

Back then, McVie was given the final say on whether Nicks could join the band. She admitted that she might have felt threatened by another woman, five years younger and from glamorous LA, competing with her for songwriting space. But she liked Nicks instantly - and from there the band's music blossomed. There were still plenty of tantrums, and lots of bitchy infighting - only it was the men providing all that. Whenever tensions simmered too high between the guys, Nicks and McVie would seek solace in each other: sharing Dunkin' Donuts, doing each other's makeup, rolling their eyes at the bad behaviour of their male counterparts.

There were double standards galore. After the splits - between Christine and John McVie, and Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham - the two women were discouraged from bringing their subsequent partners on tour. What would be the point when their exes would just glare at them and start fights? But the men would happily bring their new girlfriends along. "Oh, it was all right for them," said McVie. "But whatever keeps the lads happy, I suppose."

They might have been pragmatic but they were no pushovers. "We made a pact, probably in our first rehearsal, that we would never accept being treated as second-class citizens in the music business," Nicks told me. "That when we walked into a room we would be so fantastic and so strong and so smart that none of the uber-rockstar group of men would look through us. And they never did."

Nicks once said from the stage that McVie was her "mentor … big sister … best friend". I was probably only in her London flat for an hour or so, but I left feeling that if I were ever in a globe-straddling rock band, dealing with the many madnesses of the music industry, there would be few better people to have on your side than Christine McVie.


Genuine … McVie in 1983

PHOTOGRAPHS: PICTORIAL PRESS/ALAMY; EUGENE ADEBARI/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK; GETTY




'I'm more likely to think about a movie that I'm not proud of'

Death, disaster and dodgy accents

Don Cheadle has been a superhero, a cockney criminal - and now an Elvis-obsessed academic in White Noise. So does he still think he only has 'percussive recognition', asks **Ryan Gilbey**

Is Don Cheadle a cold fish or a cool customer? It isn't clear at first. The 58-year-old actor, who has been celebrated (he received an Oscar nomination in 2005 for Hotel Rwanda) and mocked (for his mangled cockney accent in Ocean's Eleven and its sequels), has asked in advance for the cameras to be off during our video call. Our body clocks are also out of whack: it's the crack of dawn for me in the UK, evening for him in Hawaii. What's he doing there? "Chilling." What can he see? "It's night. So nothing."

By way of preliminary chit-chat, I bring up A Strange Loop, the Tony-winning Broadway hit about a queer Black theatre usher; Cheadle has co-produced the show along with RuPaul, Jennifer Hudson and Alan Cumming. He is nothing if not an LGBTQ+ ally, having hosted Saturday Night Live in a "Protect Trans Kids" T-shirt. What drew him to A Strange Loop? "It was the woman who ran my production company. I just followed her lead." Does he think it will translate beyond the US? "No idea."

Steer him on to the topic of Noah Baumbach's frantic new adaptation of Don DeLillo's White Noise and he becomes mercifully more animated. In this collision of disaster movie, campus comedy and existential horror, Cheadle plays Murray Siskind, a college professor - white and Jewish on the page, African American on screen - who is obsessed with making Elvis Presley part of the curriculum, just as his colleague (Adam Driver) has done with Hitler. "Elvis is my Hitler," he declares.

"It's bananas," says Cheadle. "We're sending up that kind of ivory tower academia. Murray is turned on by ideas. He wants to cement his place, somehow, with this focus on Elvis. It's farcical but he longs to do something of relevance, to give himself more insight into the human condition." He is also the character who has the most honest relationship with death. "All the worrying you do doesn't change anything," the actor explains. "You are going to die. You are. You can spend your time on your way to that moment being terrified and not living, or you can live until you die."

Can he remember learning about death? "No. But I think it changes as you get closer to it, whether because of age or from people you know dying. It's yours to wrestle with. Over the course of my life, the way I've felt about it has shifted." How about now? "Tonight? At 8.30? Here on the couch?" He ponders this. "I'm just a passenger. Mm-hm. Yeah. It's there."

Has he ever reflected on the kind of immortality that comes with his job? Perhaps when he's done a film that makes him proud? "I'm more likely to think about that if I do one I'm *not* proud of," he laughs. "Like: shit, people are gonna be seeing that for a long time. But I don't know if we're going to be here that long. We are dangerously close, I believe, to cementing our fate as a species on this planet." He imagines future inhabitants of Earth digging up old VHS tapes of his movies: "'What is this crap? Ah, I see, so if you stack them up and put adhesive tape around them, you can climb up high and reach stuff …'"

It's funny to think of his career in those utilitarian terms. The son of a teacher and a psychologist, Cheadle moved from state to state (Missouri, Nebraska, Colorado) during his childhood before training as an actor at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). He landed small roles in the Vietnam war film Hamburger Hill and Dennis Hopper's cops-and-gangs thriller Colours. A taste of success arrived when he played Ice Tray, Will Smith's wiseacre pal in a 1990 episode of The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air. The character went down so well that Cheadle was promised his own show.

It nearly happened, too: the Ice Tray pilot was in the can and ready to go. Then the executive who commissioned it jumped ship, killing all his unmade projects in the process. "The day before that, I gave my brother my car. I said: 'I'm about to make a lot of dough.' Then I got the call." Did he ask for the car back? "Nuh-uh. It was a lesson. Don't count your chickens."

He bounced around in TV-land, most notably playing a hotel manager in the only season of The Golden Palace, a Golden Girls spin-off. Clips from an episode about the Confederate flag went viral recently, he tells me. "Blanche considered the flag part of her heritage. My character found that offensive. Eventually, we reached across and hugged it out." Was he happy with how it was handled? "In a 22-minute sitcom? I mean … no! They got as deep as they were ever gonna get. But at least they brought it up."

In 1995, everything changed. He had recently left Picket Fences, the small-town TV comedy-drama



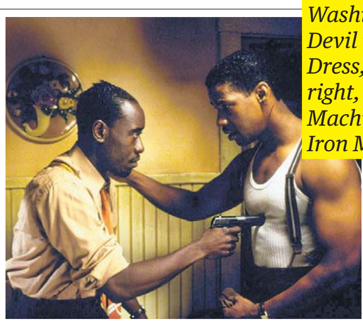
With Adam Driver and Greta Gerwig in White Noise

PHOTOGRAPHS: COREY NICKOLS/GETTY FOR IMDB; NETFLIX; TRISTAR/SPORTSPHOTO/ALLSTAR; MARVEL STUDIOS/SPORTSPHOTO/ALLSTAR

series from future Big Little Lies creator David E Kelley, because his storylines as an upstanding DA were so drab. "It was like: 'Your guy is the heart of the show.' Get me the fuck out of here! I want to have crazy-ass experiences like the other characters."

The risk paid off. Years previously, in 1986, Cheadle had starred in Punk, the thesis film by the director Carl Franklin, who was now making Devil in a Blue Dress, starring Denzel Washington as the reluctant private eye Easy Rawlins. The one role Franklin hadn't cast was the hero's psychotic acquaintance, Mouse. And practically the only African American actor in town he hadn't auditioned yet was Cheadle. "I told everyone: 'I'd be wrong for the part. I'm 10 years younger than Denzel.'"

One afternoon, he found himself in the crowded waiting room of an ear, nose and throat doctor. "I was smooshed behind the door. It flies open and Carl walks in. Straight away, the receptionist says: 'It's too crowded in here. You two' - she points at me and Carl - 'go into the other room.' He and I get talking. Next day, he calls me in. My life is peppered with those meant-to-be moments." Thank goodness for the ENT doctor, I say. "Yeah. *And* he got rid of those little polyps, so everything worked out."





With Denzel Washington in Devil in a Blue Dress, and right, as War Machine in Iron Man 2

Cheadle was electrifying as Mouse, who kills as casually as other people roll cigarettes. When Easy expresses dismay at him for strangling a hostage, Mouse blinks back calmly: "If you didn't want him killed, why'd you leave him with me?" After that, he was on a roll: Paul Thomas Anderson's Boogie Nights, John Singleton's Rosewood, Warren Beatty's political comedy Bulworth. Not to mention Out of Sight, his first of six films to date with Steven Soderbergh, including Traffic, the recent No Sudden Move and (oh dear) the Ocean's series.

> **You are going to die. You can spend your time on your way being terrified, or you can live**

I point out that as a Brit, I am duty-bound to ask about his accent in those films. "I appreciate that," he deadpans. "It's not just your job. Your countrymen would *demand* it." Is it true he didn't want to go cockney but that Soderbergh insisted? "No. Steven said: 'You don't have to do it.' I said: 'Well, that's how you wrote him. I'll try it.'" Try he did. Though in 2019, he happily embraced the online theory that his car-crash vowels were merely part of his character's cover: "Now I can say 'he was an American doing a British accent - *you guys missed that?*'"

Even as his career was exploding in the 90s, Cheadle still felt like a jobbing actor. "Every time they say: 'That's a wrap,' you're unemployed again." He once used the phrase "percussive recognition" to describe his level of fame, meaning that strangers click their fingers repeatedly as they struggle to remember where they've seen him. "It would usually be Hotel Rwanda." In Britain, it was often The Guard, where he played a by-the-book FBI agent paired with Brendan Gleeson as a coarse, buffoonish garda. "These were movies that hit the zeitgeist."

The percussive recognition years must surely be behind him since he joined the Marvel Cinematic Universe as James "Rhodey" Rhodes, AKA War Machine. This isn't just hitting the zeitgeist - it's saturation bombing. "It hits all quadrants, yes," he says coolly. He has put in the hours in assorted Iron Man and Avengers outings, even earning a baffling Emmy nomination for a 98-second cameo in the TV series Falcon and the Winter Soldier: "I don't really get it either," he tweeted.

Now he is being rewarded with his own War Machine spin-off movie, Armour Wars. Does he really think there's more to explore in Rhodey? "There's nothing that actually *has* been explored," he protests. "Who are his friends? What are his relationships? What does he want? I'm not complaining. But I don't think we know anything yet." So we'll find out which side of the bed he sleeps on, and who with? "All that stuff. His favourite ice-cream flavour. What his peccadilloes are." The camera might be off but you can sense the twinkle in his eye.

White Noise is in cinemas from today and on Netflix from 23 December.

Classified





(From left) Shabaka Hutchings, Rhian Teasdale, Sherelle, Nilüfer Yanya and Eliza Rose



A year of stress and self-care

Wet Leg, Nilüfer Yanya, Shabaka Hutchings, Eliza Rose and Sherelle talk to **Kate Hutchinson** about a wild 2022 – from TikTok and burnout to Kanye

It was the year that Ed Sheeran won a court case, Beyoncé returned, Kanye West horrified the world and musicians struggled with the new economics of playing live. We got together five artists who made a mark on 2022 to discuss it all. Eliza Rose is a London-born DJ whose independently released single Baddest of Them All spent two weeks at No 1. Shabaka Hutchings is a multi-instrumentalist who performs with Sons of Kemet, Shabaka and the Ancestors and the Comet Is Coming. Sherelle is a DJ who broke through with her 2019 Boiler Room set and has since recorded a mix for Fabric. Rhian Teasdale is one-half of Isle of Wight indie band Wet Leg, whose 2021 debut single, Chaise Longue, went viral; they released their self-titled debut album this spring. Nilüfer Yanya is a London-born guitarist and songwriter who has released two albums, 2019's Miss Universe and this year's Painless, to widespread acclaim.

January

Neil Young demanded that Spotify remove his music because Joe Rogan was spreading vaccine misinformation. Is it up to musicians to be calling out these companies?

Shabaka Hutchings All musicians aren't Neil Young. He can do that because he's in a position where if he takes his music off Spotify, it will be a massive media event. And then because of that, people start talking.

Eliza Rose He's in a position of power.

Sherelle I'm not too sure if the effect would be the same if it was coming from a PoC artist.

Rhian Teasdale Also the moment you take something down, you're empowering it. And then suddenly, Joe Rogan's followers will be like: "Why are they taking away the truth from us?"

February

Little Simz won the Brit award for breakthrough artist (and in October, the Mercury prize), despite being on her fourth album. Are we recognising great UK talent too late?

Nilüfer Yanya I did think it was crazy that she was called a breakthrough artist. She's been such a big artist in our minds for a long time.

ER I started singing when I was 21 and I gave up after that for years because it felt like an uphill struggle. Times have changed now and I was able to build my own platform with the power of social media. Today, you don't necessarily have to have the machine behind you as an independent artist to get your accolades. But it's still not perfect.


Little Simz

Do awards matter?

SH I've never had anything to do with the Brits. If I get breakthrough artist when I'm 45, then cool. The question for me is: what *are* the Mercurys and the Brits? We call them institutions, but it's a group of specific people who make choices. How are they making the choices? Who chooses *them*?

Wet Leg have just been nominated for five Grammys. That's got to mean something?

RT It's surprising because I don't know what hoops we've jumped through to get there - but there *are* hoops. We had an interview and it was like: "So, what do you know about the Grammys?" And I was like: "Oh, is that the one with the actors?"

March

Ed Sheeran appeared in court over plagiarism accusations (he was vindicated). What effect are cases like this having on creativity?

NY There was a video of Ed on [Instagram] being like: "Please, we need to stop the rate of people saying: 'You're stealing my song.'" He said it's damaging the industry, which came across as very insincere to me. All music is stolen to a degree, but the thing that really


Ed Sheeran

annoyed me is that he is trying to put a full stop on this conversation.

ER It's a bit of a free for all at the moment and people are becoming greedy [by suing artists]. I do think this litigious era is going to stop creative flows.

SH That's how creativity happens. In jazz, people copy vibes all the time to progress: take someone you like and play a bit like them until you get past it.

April

There was a wave of artists asking fans to stop disruptive behaviour at shows. Should gigs be more on artists' terms?

NY I don't ask a lot from my audience at a show - it's always much nicer when you feel that people are listening and you have their attention, but crowds change so much from show to show and I'm totally OK with not controlling that. The phone thing is a weird one, because I think a lot of people benefit from their fans posting about their shows, which is something maybe bigger artists don't need!

S It's great that artists are taking a stand against fan behaviour. I often have had issues with people holding up their phones and being quite intrusive.

May

By this point you were all shaping up to have massive years. How do you ride the hype wave without it affecting your art?

SH I sent an email to my managers and agents early in the year, at a particularly hectic point of touring, saying: "I want everyone to consider the parable of the goose that laid the golden eggs. If you kill this goose then none of you are going to get paid any more. So just remember this when you're just pushing me out on the road like this." The agent said thanks for reminding them about that because there's not often a lot of consideration of what

> **You don't have to have the machine behind you nowadays to get your accolades**

they're pushing artists to do. It depletes you.

ER I don't know how long anything's going to last, so I'm utilising what I can for this moment and trying to use this hype wave to cement myself in this space, and trying to have longevity.

NY It's something I think about a lot - sustainability as opposed to exterior goals. But then … why do I also have that goal where I want people to see what I'm doing?"

SH It's not a bad thing. That's what we do, communicate with

PHOTOGRAPHS: LINDA NYLIND/THE GUARDIAN; GETTY; WIREIMAGE

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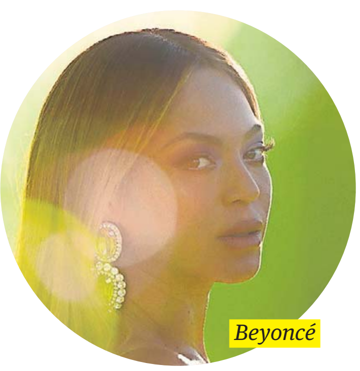


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an audience. The question is, how much you have for yourself and how much you give out.
RT We are starting to get asked about a second album. We want to go back to that feeling of when we made Chaise Longue: just me, Hester and Joshua, really late at night, with a microphone up in the living room. I don't feel pressure to make the thing. But I do feel the pressure of: how am I going to get back to that carefree feeling with so many people watching?
S I cleared my Instagram recently. I felt weird about posting videos of me DJing, because I see other DJs and musicians posting and then it then becomes a battle of "Who's got the biggest amount of hands in the air?" It's ironic because how I blew up is a video of me dancing with my friends and having a good time on Boiler Room.

June

Beyoncé returned with Renaissance. Was it about time that dance music's Black roots were acknowledged in the mainstream?
ER She worked with the right people, she acknowledged the queer community. I was proud as a PoC for her to do that album.
S Harking back to LGBTQIA+ people within those scenes is really cool. Beyoncé has a way of being able to be within the mainstream that means particular people would not be threatened by her. Also, Eliza being the first female DJ to get a No 1 since Sonique [in 2000, with It Feels So Good] adds to the history of PoC in dance music. That's important because of the historic erasure of Black women within it. It's Beyoncé's album on one side, Eliza on another.


Beyoncé

July

Beyoncé and Lizzo edited ableist slurs out of their music; later in the year Taylor Swift edited the word "fat" out of one of her videos. Should artists be able to airbrush their mistakes?
NY I think it's good. We're in this culture at the moment where you're not allowed to make mistakes. But I think it's good when people make mistakes and to try and rectify it. Whereas "I don't want anyone to know I've made a mistake" is a different kind of fear. It's not healthy.
S You've got to look at who is on their teams. For Swift's team to not realise that "fat" could be offensive in that context shows that they don't have a very diverse team.

There's a white audience that enjoys Black music but gets off on the trauma porn

August

The AI-generated rapper FN Meka was dropped from a major label after complaints of racial stereotyping. Has enough been done to counter racism in the music industry following summer 2020? What, if anything, has changed?
NY I don't think enough can ever be done to counteract racism, full stop.
ER What I can't understand is, how many people did that go through to get signed off?
S There's a lot of people within the rap world who are passing away and music execs are trying to tap into that world. FN Meka definitely wasn't made for a Black audience; more for a white audience who enjoys Black music but also gets off on the trauma porn of it all. Why was he being [beaten] by the police? That just proves that nothing's ever going to change. People posting up black squares and then saying they're going to have initiatives ... But what about the execs, or other people in higher positions?
SH What if there can't be any change? This is the question no one asks. What if racism doesn't end? What if it's too culturally ingrained?
RT It's so hard to tell whether the industry has changed when you're in your own echo chamber. I look at younger generations and I see it's getting less and less racist from where I'm sat in my echo chamber and my own experience.
NY Or it's getting deeper.
RT That's a really horrible thought.
SH Actually, it's pretty liberating. Because then you're not shocked at occurrences, you go: "OK, that's happening, how do you move forward?" Or how do you create situations that cushion the impact on people of colour, bearing in mind that it's not going to go away?

September

This month represented a peak for artists cancelling shows for mental health and financial reasons. Is this the worst time ever to be a musician?
RT Everyone was really excited coming out of the pandemic. I've never been busy with touring before this because we're a baby band and then you realise: "Oh, shit. I'm human and I need a certain amount of sleep." It's basic self-care but it's a hard balance.
SH The pandemic made people aware of what self-care actually looks like, because before that, the situation was unsustainable.
S I feel sorry for promoters now who are trying to sell tickets because it's cold and there's a lot less disposable income.
NY It comes down to lack of stability in the music industry. You're expected to commit to touring schedules even if you're not sure you can financially. Is that tour going to break you? It all comes down to the big questions: what is achievable? And what is stability? It's hard to know where that line is.
SH It's difficult because to expect to earn your income touring is unrealistic. It's not going to happen for everyone. When people say [impressed voice]: "You're touring the US and it's on Instagram!" – touring the US is *terrible*.


Rhian Teasdale, Eliza Rose and Sherelle in discussion

October

Kanye West used white supremacist slogans in a fashion show, made antisemitic remarks and was consequently dropped by many brands affiliated with him. Is there a way back for the rapper?
SH What does it look like if there's not a way back for him? Is it that he just disappears? If this is effectively a society that calls itself Christian, as in those principles underpin it, then forgiveness and redemption should be possibilities. Otherwise, we're this brutal society that ostracises people. I feel really sorry for Kanye. Not to dismiss what he's done and the hurt that he's caused, but he's going through a public breakdown.
ER You can have battles with mental health and not say racist rhetoric. It's dangerous what he's doing, he's giving people permission to say certain things.
RT The people around him that have been enabling him, maybe those people will stop making money and that is when someone will stop to help him.
S Sometimes people wait till a person is basically dead. I'm definitely not pushing this for him at all. But it's a massive car crash. I think because he's got so much money, he can't be cancelled. Being a guy, he can also get away with it – because Azealia Banks was cancelled pretty fast.
SH There is a thing about publicly humiliating powerful Black men. When Black men get to a particular position, if they then do something wrong then they get their comeuppance. He's just that figure for this age. It's sad because he's been so influential on a musical level.


Shabaka Hutchings and Nilüfer Yanya


Kanye West

November

The singles chart celebrated its 70th anniversary. How relevant is the chart today?
S For me they're only relevant because Eliza went to No 1.
ER Being in the charts was never a goal; it was unattainable. I'm gassed, because Baddest of Them All is an underground track that I released on my dubplate label and wrote completely by myself. Now the track is signed to Warner, but it shows that there is space for different types of music to get to the top.

December

If you could make a New Year's resolution for the music industry in 2023, what would it be?
RT Equality in all senses, whether that's race or even genre.
NY If the music industry was to not be an industry then that would be really interesting; if it wasn't about who's making the most income, because you weren't worried about numbers.
S Community, basically.
ER More space in the mainstream for the underground to come through.
SH Communication. There might be answers from someone who's done it before you.
S Just looking out for people. And I hope people get more disposable income. Freeze those electric bills!



'I have a hard time with authority' … Marie Kreutzer

The punk empress

Marie Kreutzer's latest film, about Empress Elisabeth of Austria, is a rebellious drama of beef-broth diets and body-shaming with echoes of Meghan Markle's treatment by the media and royalty, the director tells Cath Clarke

Marie Kreutzer grew up in Vienna, where the 19th-century empress Elisabeth of Austria is a tourist-shop darling. She smiles from tea towels, chocolate boxes and all manner of tat. "She is not someone who is cool or interesting here," the director shrugs over Zoom from her apartment in the city.

So, when the Phantom Thread actor Vicky Krieps suggested they make a biopic about Elisabeth (or "Sisi", as she is affectionately known), Kreutzer laughed it off. "I didn't think she was serious." The pair had worked together on 2016's We Used to Be Cool.

But the idea of a Sisi film got under her skin and Kreutzer began researching, wondering what stage of the royal's life she might dramatise. Sisi's marriage at the age of 16 to Emperor Franz Joseph has been done to death on screen (the wedding had been arranged between the emperor and her sister, but when he clapped eyes on 15-year-old Sisi, he demanded a swap). Her death from stabbing, in 1898, at the hands of an Italian anarchist, felt too obvious: "Everyone knows that story."

Instead, Kreutzer's film, Corsage, opens in 1877. Elisabeth, played by Krieps, is turning 40, and she's done with playing nice. No more people-pleasing, this is a portrait of a right royal troublemaker. On the poster, Sisi gives the (ivory silk-clad) finger to camera. "She never wanted to be an empress," says Kreutzer. And at some point, she stopped faking it, would vanish for months from the Habsburg court to travel alone and incognito. When she was forced to attend state banquets in Vienna, she'd sit statue still, refusing to eat or speak. "When I read that, I thought: That's like a punk performance," says Kreutzer. "She had to be there, but nobody could make her touch the food or talk. These small acts of rebellion intrigued me. I thought it was interesting to observe a woman who doesn't want to meet all the expectations any more."

It's a thread that runs through all her films. "It's not conscious. But I was raised as a feminist. I've always had a hard time with authority." Her last film was the underrated The Ground Beneath My Feet, about a finance executive looking after her schizophrenic sister, trying to hold the strands of her life together.

Kruetzer grew up in Vienna. Her father, an architect, worked long hours. When the family moved into a wreck of a house, her mother, Ingrid Lechner-Sonnek, renovated it, doing much of the hard graft herself. At the school gates, Ingrid wasn't like the other mums. "She had short black curly hair, and was always wearing jumpsuits and pants, never high heels," Kreutzer laughs. "She wasn't a typical mother of that time. Later, she became a politician and was really successful. I always saw her as very strong, standing up for herself." Lechner-Sonnek went on to become a chair of the Green party in Austria. She advised her daughters to find what they wanted to do in life. "Work hard. Don't settle down too early. Don't get pregnant."

Elisabeth of Austria had no choice about babies. From the day she married, her purposes in life were to produce an heir and look pretty. She is often described as the first royal celebrity of modern times. And the strain of living under constant public scrutiny took a toll on her mental health. To stay thin, she survived on a near-starvation diet and exercised obsessively. "It's so clear she had an eating disorder," says Kreutzer. Even after giving birth to four children, she maintained an 18-inch waist. In the film - like some modern day Instagram wellness guru - we watch her living on a diet of orange slices and beef broth.

"She became famous for her small waist, and then she had to keep it," says Kreutzer. "Because if that's the one thing you have that people find lovable or attractive about you, that gives you attention or acceptance, then of course you have to keep it."

> **"She had an eating disorder: famous for her 18-inch waist, she had to keep it that way**

I tell her that what struck me watching the film is how women are still brought up to be pleasing. Yes, says Kreutzer. "I have a daughter who's also not very pleasing at some points, and then I'm always in that conflict. I want her to fit in. I say: 'Can you please be polite to that person who you don't like?' She says: 'Why do I have to be friendly if I don't like her?' And I'm like: 'Yeah.'"

Writing the Corsage script, what Kreutzer noticed was how modern and universal Elisabeth's story felt. She'd pick up gossip magazines. "Meghan Markle was on every cover." No two headlines were the same, but they were all nasty, unkind and critical. "It was always her doing something wrong. I saw that things hadn't changed at all."

In the second half of the 1800s, the media body-shamed the empress and mocked her for being past her prime. "All that stuff, which happens exactly in the same way today to every female celebrity."

Elisabeth was under pressure to age gracefully. It's the same for women now, worse perhaps, Kreutzer says - surrounded by images of perfection on social media and adverts. "You cannot get away from it." In her 40s she's noticed the value society puts on staying young and beautiful "I'm 45. A lot of my female friends are between 40 and 50. You really see how different women deal with ageing. Some get botox, others are like: No. I like my grey hair."

For her, the success of Corsage - it won the best film award at the London film festival in October - is not without its stress on the appearances front. There are photoshoots, "I never like pictures of myself", and the hassle of thinking about what to wear. After this interview, she has to go pick up a dress for a premiere. "It's really unfair," she says, only half joking. "My husband, who's 10 years older than me, is also in film. If he has to go to an award ceremony, he puts on a suit, one of the two he owns." She laughs, throwing up her hands.

Kreutzer's revisionist empress is flawed and fascinating. It's thrilling to watch Sisi unshackle herself. She calls her husband an arsehole and, less forgivably, is mean to servants. "That's how she was raised. To her, a servant was a lower being."

In early meetings someone asked the question: "Do you think people will like her?" It's the same every time she makes a film. It drives Kreutzer nuts. No one would ever ask if a male character is likable. "We would follow a mass murderer if he was a cool character, and still be on his side. But it's very difficult for female characters to be anything other than stereotypes." She shakes her head, frustrated.

"It has become a mission for me, showing complex female characters, because we all are."

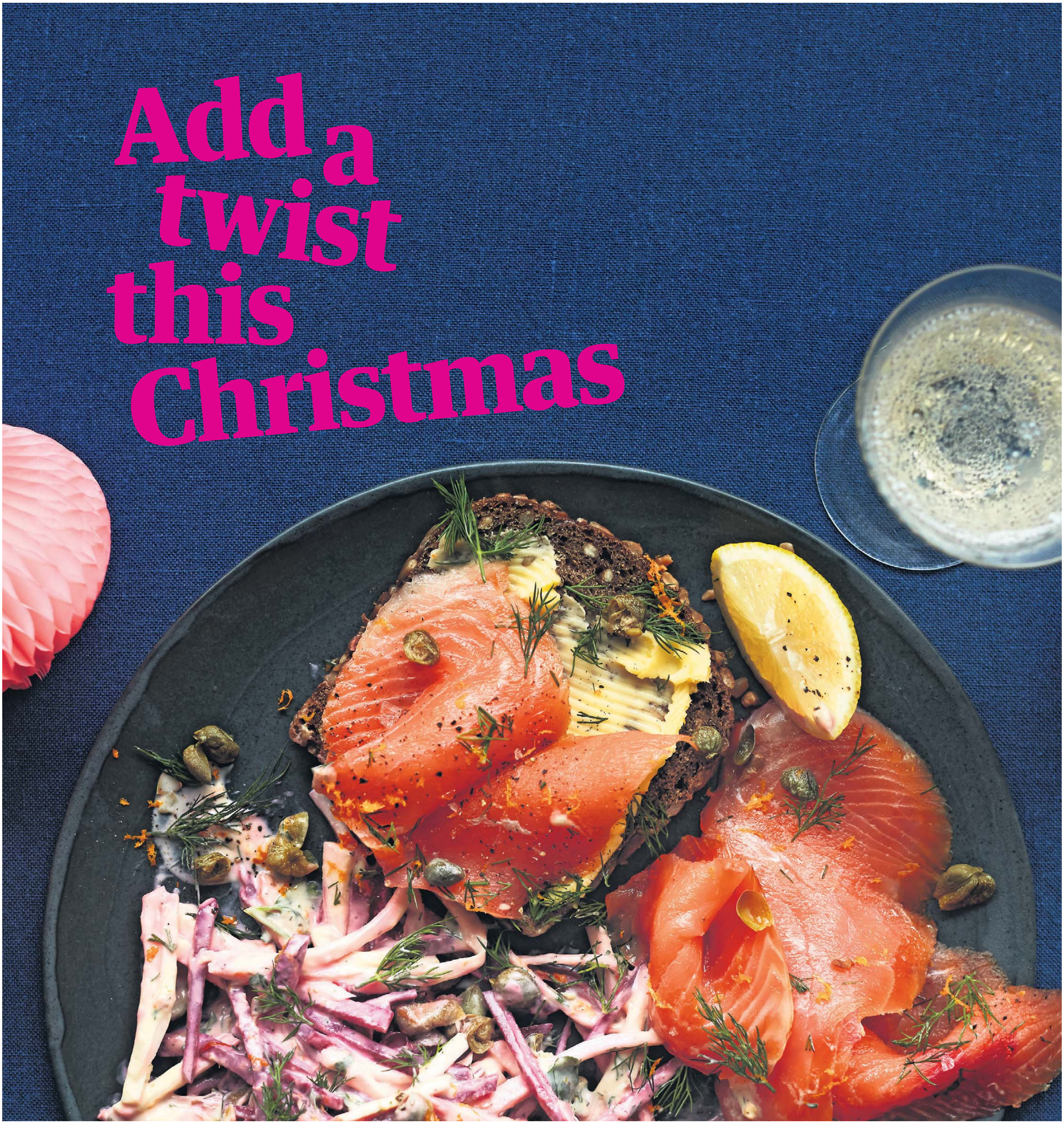
Corsage is released in the UK on 26 December.



Vicky Krieps as Elisabeth in Corsage



PHOTOGRAPHS: JEFF VESPA/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK; ALAMY; MK2 FILMS/FELIX VRATNY



Delicious alternatives for your Christmas table

In this 32-page special our much loved food writers reveal alternative recipes to liven up your Christmas dinner. From Yotam Ottolenghi's inexpensive chicken roast to Meera Sodha's vegan cauliflower pilaf.

Only with the Guardian on Saturday 3 December

The Guardian



Peter Bradshaw's film of the week

White Noise



DeLillo's bleak fable is a comic tour de force

★★★★★

Dir *Noah Baumbach*

Starring *Adam Driver, Greta Gerwig, Don Cheadle*

135 mins **Cert** *15*

Noah Baumbach's terrifically stylish movie, adapted by him from the 1985 novel by Don DeLillo, is a deadpan comedy of catastrophisation, a meditation on western prosperity and its anxieties, its intellectual satiety. It's an apocalyptic reverie founded on the assumption that nothing can really go wrong … can it? Or could it be that our preoccupations with ecological disaster are not rational, but futile occult rituals?

His film amplifies how prescient the book is about the fears of the present day. The horror of the American suburban heartland in the face of a poisonous chemical cloud floating overhead - the "airborne toxic event" - feels like an address to Covid and the lockdown.

Adam Driver plays a midwestern academic called Jack Gladney. Greta Gerwig plays Babette, his amiable, distracted wife - both divorcees, they preside over a lively household of precocious children and stepchildren.

Jack is America's leading light in the strangely preposterous discipline of Hitler Studies, a technique of deconstructing the iconography of Hitler without being overwhelmed by or even aware of the tragic and horrendous context. Jack's colleague Murray Siskind (drolly played by Don Cheadle) is hoping to do for Elvis what Jack has done with Hitler, and a big set piece has the two men delivering an ingenious (and flippant and provocative) analysis of Elvis and Hitler at the same time. Slavoj Žižek has got nothing on these guys.

Jack and Babette are content in an uneasy way, dramatised by time-honoured movie visits to a giant supermarket that is the site of a gloriously choreographed closing credit sequence. But Babette has symptoms of what could be early onset dementia: she also seems to be addicted to a drug, Dylar, empty bottles of which appear in the trash.

And then the great crash happens - an environmental disaster caused by a truck of gasoline crashing into a train transporting toxic waste. This bizarre freak occurrence exposes Jack to airborne toxins, which may well kill him in a couple of decades. True or not, this claim has been a way for Jack to realise he is going to die. And Babette, too, is afraid of her own death. Death is the film's stratum of seriousness beneath the campus crisis and marital comedy.

Jack and Babette's bizarre lives are too strange to be sympathised with, for all the Spielbergian family chatter in the kitchen. But they are there to be to marvelled at. It is such a fascinating, invigorating spectacle.

Three Minutes: A Lengthening

★★★★★

Dir *Bianca Stigter*

With *Helena Bonham Carter, Glenn Kurtz, Moszek Tuchendler*

69 mins **Cert** *12A*

Perhaps "a deepening" is closer to the mark. This arresting film is about a process of reconstruction, or recontextualisation, like finding a fragment of an Etruscan pot in the soil and imagining what the whole pot looked like, what shape the society that produced it took, and what the violence that destroyed it looked like.

In 2009, author Glenn Kurtz discovered a home movie shot by his grandfather David, who had come as a child from Poland to the US. The film recorded the family's European vacation in 1938 and included a remarkable three-minute segment shot in his home town of Nasielsk in eastern Poland. The movie vividly captures the Jewish inhabitants' happiness at that moment, just months before they were deported by the invading Nazis to be murdered in Treblinka.

As Kurtz's camera panned across the town square, the faces of grinning children surge into the forefront, with warier, curious adults in the background. This film recounts the historical process of digitally restoring the film and then putting it up online and asking for survivors to come forward.

Director Bianca Stigter doesn't show any modern faces or activity on screen, nothing other than the flickering film itself, with moments and freeze-frame images shown over and over. This is a gripping historical investigation.



Tori and Lokita

★★★☆☆

Dir *Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Luc Dardenne*

Starring *Pablo Schils, Joely Mbundu, Alban Ukaj*

89 mins **Cert** *15*

The Dardenne brothers, Jean-Pierre and Luc, have won golden opinions over the decades: two Cannes Palmes d'Or (for Rosetta in 1999 and The Child in 2005) and many other prizes. But for me the dynamism of their work has fallen off in recent years, and there are sometimes issues with basic plot plausibility, for all the obvious research that has gone into their screenplays. Having said all this, I still responded to the heartbeat of idealism, urgency and force of this movie: a parable of inequality and injustice.

In modern-day Belgium, a young woman called Lokita (Joely Mbundu) and a boy, Tori (Pablo Schils), both from Benin, have endured a terrible journey to the promised land of the EU and are now in a children's home for immigrants. To get their residence papers, they have to claim to be brother and sister. Desperate for cash and still owing money to people traffickers, Tori gets a job selling drugs under cover of delivering pizzas and Lokita agrees to be taken blindfold by criminals to a secret cannabis farm, a truly terrifying place in the middle of nowhere. She is locked in for three months tending the plants under the unbearably hot lights, with her



phone taken away, on the promise of payment when the time is up.

Tori and Lokita are thus installed in various stages of the production and distribution chain for a particular commodity: an illegal one and they, too, are illegals. It is this general illegality that creates the market forces keeping Tori and Lokita obedient and scared workers. Tori's passionate love for Lokita brings them back together - but triggers a disastrous chain of events. There is some ungainliness in the dramatic language, but a simplicity and clarity of purpose that I responded to and the Dardennes have got excellent performances from their young leads.

Games



Marvel's Midnight Suns

Nintendo Switch, PC, PlayStation 4/5, Xbox

★★★★☆

Playing a turn-based strategy game developed by genre leader Firaxis, creator of the brilliant XCOM reboots, I did not foresee having to sort out the love life of macho vampiric superhero Blade. Nor did I expect to be joining a book club with Captain Marvel.

Yet these unlikely scenarios are very much a part of this latest Marvel video game spinoff. Here, players take on the role of a new hero character, Hunter, usefully accompanied by two superhero collectives: the Avengers and the titular Midnight Suns. Between missions you all hang out in an abbey, surrounded by an estate of caves, graveyards and standing stones.

As in XCOM, you fight a series of turn-based battles: three heroes, an array of Hydra soldiers and the odd supervillain face off in small arenas.

It's the clever combination of attacks, bluffs and defensive moves that make each battle so compelling. Working out just how and when to use skill cards takes several fights, but when you get it right, the thrill of destroying a squad of soldiers by summoning a burning car and then driving it over them is exquisite.

Yet the randomness of the card deal at the start of each turn may be an anathema to players who want to win using battlefield tactics.

Midnight Suns is its own thing, combining strategy and soap opera in a nod toward Japanese battle tactics games and the frivolity of the Marvel universe. This is a hugely challenging game, with dozens of hours of play and a narrative that wants to say interesting things about family, identity and sacrifice. Sometimes, it even manages it.

Keith Stuart

Peter Gabriel
i/o The Tour

Sat 17 June	Birmingham Utilita Arena
Mon 19 June	London The O2
Thu 22 June	Glasgow OVO Hydro
Fri 23 June	Manchester AO Arena

livenation.co.uk
petergabriel.com

LIVE NATION REALWORLD



Alexis Petridis's album of the week

Vince Guaraldi Trio A Charlie Brown Christmas (Super Deluxe Edition)



A moody festive classic with nary a sleighbell

Jazz

Label Fantasy

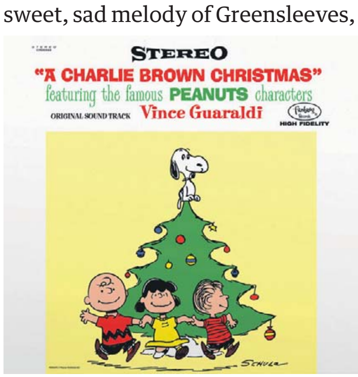
★★★★★

Vince Guaraldi's legacy is a curious thing. His name is absent from the index of Ted Gioia's authoritative The History of Jazz. When the great jazz critic Nat Hentoff wrote an essay on him in 2010 it was in the context of rediscovering a lost figure, comparing him to the largely forgotten trombonist Jack Jenney.

Like Jenney, Guaraldi died young, and, like Jenney, he played alongside a succession of names more likely to crop up in jazz history books and documentaries than his own. But that is where the similarities end. Guaraldi's career is hardly a case of what-ifs. He was an expansive, boundary-breaking artist. He saw - and continues to see - vast commercial success: 1962's Cast Your Fate to the Wind was, alongside Dave Brubeck's Take Five, one of the few jazz hits of the era; 1965's A Charlie Brown Christmas is one of the bestselling jazz albums of all time, alongside Miles Davis's Kind of Blue.

You suspect the problem for jazz historians is that said album was the soundtrack to a children's cartoon, albeit a very particular children's cartoon. A Charlie Brown Christmas was commissioned by the Coca-Cola Company. They presumably weren't expecting Charles M Schulz to write a script about the money-grubbing commercialisation of Christmas and the depression wrought by festivities that won't live up to expectations. Certainly, executives at the CBS network were horrified: at its pace, its simple animation, and at Guaraldi's soundtrack.

A Charlie Brown Christmas is shot through with a haunting vein of melancholy, which Guaraldi amplified in his score. Christmas Time Is Here rests on moody minor chords, undercutting the hopeful lyrical message that's sung by a slightly off-key children's choir. One of Guaraldi's masterstrokes was to insist on recording the choir with imperfections intact, to match the cartoon itself - the characters were voiced not by actors, but ordinary children - so that the vocal tracks recall a school nativity play or carol concert. The instrumental version feels like a long, depleted exhalation, compounded by Guaraldi's piano frequently playing just behind the beat. Something faintly ominous lurks in the background of My Little Drum. What Child Is This is based around the sweet, sad melody of Greensleeves,



while O Tannenbaum opens with Guaraldi playing the melody alone at the piano, his performance filled with pauses. It seems to express more hesitancy about the festive season than a wholehearted embrace.

But it's not all yearning and tristesse. Christmas Is Coming propels itself along, accurately drawing a picture of anticipation; Skating is straightforwardly sublime, its melody descending in flurries. Perhaps that's the reason for A Charlie Brown Christmas's longevity, and indeed the reason there's a market for another deluxe edition - seemingly an annual occurrence - which packs out four CDs with enough alternative takes to satisfy even the most obsessive fan. It never touches the sonic cliches of Christmas music, and manages to convey the complete range of emotions you might feel about the season. There's not a sleighbell to be heard.

There's no doubt the Charlie Brown soundtracks overshadowed the rest of Guaraldi's career: the vast majority of his oeuvre isn't on streaming services, and on the cover of the 2009 compilation The Definitive Vince Guaraldi, he's pictured alongside Charlie Brown's piano-playing chum Schroeder. Clearly, he didn't mind: he carried on scoring Charlie Brown cartoons for the rest of his life, shifting towards a vaguely fusion-inspired sound as he went. As a side-effect, he secured prime-time exposure for jazz in an era when jazz artists struggled to get anywhere near TV. Guaraldi probably deserves more shine in jazz histories on that basis alone. Then again, once a year, his star burns brighter than any of his peers: like the cartoon it soundtracks, A Charlie Brown Christmas is a low-key masterpiece.

More reviews at theguardian.com/music

Global album of the month

Artist Various artists

Album Perú Selvático: Sonic Expedition Into the Peruvian Amazon 1972-1986

Label Analog Africa

★★★★☆



Anchored in hip-swaying, syncopated clave rhythms and topped with bright flute melodies, cumbia music has a centuries-old history. A new compilation highlights an overlooked subgenre that flourished in 1970s and 80s Peru: cumbia Amazonica. In the humidity of the Peruvian jungle, a group of bands developed their own psychedelic take on the folk tradition, with fast-paced percussion, electric guitars and heady reverb. Across the 18 tracks of Perú Selvático, this frenetic dance music unfurls, bringing new life to a largely forgotten sound. Descarga Royal, by Los Royals de Pucallpa, provides an early 70s example. The seeds of the Amazonian style are present in the hum of distortion accompanying the electric guitar. The wild reverb of Sonido Verde de Moyobamba's La Cervecita swiftly kicks into full-blown Amazonica, with the whoops of the band providing dancefloor fuel. Perú Selvático never fails to inspire movement. **Ammar Kalia**

Punk

Artist White Lung

Album Premonition

Label Domino

★★★★★



"I'm on a date with God and he's drunk," Mish Barber-Way rasps on Date Night. It's the lead single from White Lung's fifth album and one of the most incendiary songs of the last few years. At the end, the narrator strikes a match and tosses it towards LA, burning down her old life. The punk trio began work on Premonition in 2017, hoping to release it in 2019. Then everything changed. Barber-Way fell pregnant, against a backdrop of chaos. Premonition captures the band in a blaze of glory. Guitarist Kenneth William and drummer Anne-Marie Vassiliou pack every inch with riffs and aggression; Barber-Way lays down lyrics about motherhood. What emerges are anthems of rebirth, in which we find fury, hope and fierce maternal love. **Emma Garland**

Classical

Artist Williams/Hallé/Elder

Album A Shropshire Lad: English Songs Orchestrated by Roderick Williams

Label Hallé

★★★★☆



As well as being one of Britain's leading baritones, Roderick Williams is also a composer, mainly of much admired choral music. The twin tracks of his career come together in this collection, in which Williams is the soloist in 21 songs by British composers that he has orchestrated for the Hallé. At the heart of it are two cycles, George Butterworth's Songs from AE Housman's A Shropshire Lad, and Ralph Vaughan Williams's The House of Life. The orchestration is as perceptive as one would expect from a musician who interprets them with such finesse. Williams's performances are a reminder that no other singer today inhabits this repertoire so completely and movingly, every word perfect, every phrase exactly weighted. **Andrew Clements**



All in the name of science ... Cara Delevingne

Review Planet Sex With Cara Delevingne, BBC Three

Yes! Yes! Yes! A female-centred sex show - with no exploitation!

★★★★☆

Lucy Mangan



I think we spoke a few days ago, in a review of the docudrama Blood, Sex and Royalty, didn't we, about the beauty of low expectations? Always either met and providing a satisfaction of sorts, or exceeded and providing a degree of actual happiness? And how pessimists have a much better time of it than optimists? Yes, we did.

Well, buckle up, my pretties, because television has pulled off the same feat again. For lo, the prospect offered by the title Planet Sex with Cara Delevingne did make the spirit quail within me. But lo! The pessimist once more rejoiced. Planet Sex is far better than the frenetic, toe-curling embarrassment fest for which I had prepared myself. It is actually very good. And Cara D is actually very good indeed.

She is the perfect mix of wit, warmth, intelligence and curiosity. More importantly, she manages to be open and vulnerable - especially about the internalised homophobia and shame she still struggles with since coming out - but confident enough to set her boundaries. Never do you feel the discomfort that comes with suspecting someone has been cajoled into doing things for the camera that they would really rather not. As she reaches the critical points - often involving the insertion of a probe, the sight of which makes me hope there is a robust bonus payment clause in her contract - of investigations into female arousal while watching porn or blood flow during orgasm, doors are firmly shut and cameras cheerily seen off. We do get the ghostly outlines of the probe in situ via a medical scanner watched by the researcher (in a sex clinic in the Netherlands, which you probably guessed). "I can see your probe!" she yells happily to Delevingne. "I love that for us!" Delevingne shouts back.

Every episode covers a lot of ground without feeling too rushed. The first is about "the orgasm gap" - the fact that 95% of straight men climax during sex, while the same can be said for just 65% of their female partners. She heads to Germany, where research into this is being conducted. "I'm here to have an orgasm and donate it to science." She is shown into the masturbation wing. "Oh, it is pleasant!" she says. Cara Delevingne is British.

She is told to masturbate for at least 10 minutes and given a whistle to blow when she comes. "I should always have this whistle!" she says. Blood tests are done before and after and we learn that she is one of the 80% of people who produce endocannibinoids - yes, the body's own cannabis - when they orgasm. Then it's over to Maastricht and psychologist-sexologist Dr Marieke Dewitte to find out why only 65% of women are getting the chance. You're never going to guess the answer. Yes, that one. The penis likes the vagina, but it's the clitoris that should be involved. Historically, sex has been about only le peen. Delevingne nods and literally goes cross-eyed, which is very often all the commentary you need. Men could be given instruction, suggests the doctor. "It's an ego killer which most men can't handle," Delevingne points out in her customarily bracing manner. The good doctor is off camera at that point, but in my heart I know she is nodding and going cross-eyed.

Unlike most documentaries on the subject of sex - particularly from a female point of view - Planet Sex manages not to feel prurient or exploitative, and even more admirably it makes a concerted effort to take in the different cultural prejudices, social prohibitions and legal challenges being faced by women around the world. Radical Japanese artist Rokudenashiko has been imprisoned for her art because it shows vulvas and that is against the law. They used to be an accepted and acceptable part of Japanese art until western Christianity came along. Ain't that always the way? In Lebanon, the women who have founded an organisation to help women overcome "the one thing that unites Arab countries - our culture of shame that surrounds being in a female body" cannot show their faces for fear of reprisals.

It is not a series designed to dig deep into these issues, but it is rare that they are even touched upon as part of a grand sweep such as Planet Sex, and along with Delevingne's unexpectedly strong presenting skills and directness, it lifted the whole. I love this for us.

How to With John Wilson
11.05pm, BBC Two



The American comedy documentary-maker returns with a second series of his life tutorials, which are told through deadpan narration over covertly filmed footage of New Yorkers. In the first of tonight's double bill, Wilson shares observations on how to break into the US real estate market ("It's manageable for the right person, it's affordable," says a plucky estate agent, as the camera zooms in on a bath that's been fitted in the kitchen). His second film looks at the mysterious world of wine appreciation.

Hollie Richardson

Granite Harbour
7pm, BBC One
This new three-part crime drama follows former soldier Davis Lindo (Romario Simpson) as he arrives in Aberdeen as a new police recruit. Despite dreams of being a detective at New Scotland Yard, he swiftly gets acquainted with the Scottish city after the death of an oil executive. Corporate intrigue ensues in this thrilling opener. **Sammy Gecsoyler**

Strictly Come Dancing: Musicals Special
8pm, BBC One
Blame the football for Strictly coming a night earlier than usual. You won't want to miss it - musicals week is one of the best, if not *the* best, themes. West End stars, including Trevor Dion Nicholas, who played the Genie in Aladdin, also take to the dancefloor. The results show will follow tomorrow at 5.40pm. **HR**

Grayson's Art Club: The Exhibition
8pm, Channel 4
Now in its third year (lockdown seems a lifetime ago now ...), Grayson Perry returns to put on another amateur artist exhibition. This time the show will be in Birmingham, where he is joined by Joe Lycett - a comedian who is no stranger to creating controversial art. **HR**

The Great Game
9pm, Sky Atlantic
The Italian drama exploring the high-stakes, brutal football transfer market continues. As discredited Corso Manni (Francesco Montanari) attempts to rebuild his career, Sasha Kirillov (Vladimir Aleksic) is determined to conquer Italian football and the turf of the football agents' company ISG. **Ali Catterall**

The Big Narstie Show
11.05pm, Channel 4
Former Spice Girl Mel B, rapper and actor Jordan Stephens, SAS: Who Dares Wins star Billy Billingham, comedian Nabil Abdulrashid and influencer Alhan Gençay join Mo Gilligan and Big Narstie for a bout of unexpected late-night fun. **HR**

What's On
Scan the QR code below to sign up for the What's On newsletter, our free TV email with the best reviews, news and exclusive writing direct to your inbox every Monday

BBC One

6.0 **Breakfast** (T) **9.15** Morning Live (T) **10.0** Expert Witness (T) **10.30** Claimed and Shamed (T) (R) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (T) (R) **12.15** Bargain Hunt (T) **1.0** News (T) **1.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **1.45** Doctors (T) **2.15** Planet Earth: A Monkey's Tale (T) (R) **2.30** MOTD Live: Fifa World Cup 2022 (T) South Korea v Portugal (kick-off 3pm). **5.15** Pointless (T) (R) **6.0** News (T) **6.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **7.0 Granite Harbour** (T)

8.0 **Strictly Come Dancing: Musicals Special** (T) The couples take to the ballroom floor for the musicals-themed quarter-final.

9.05 **MasterChef: The Professionals** (T) The semi-finals conclude with four chefs facing two tough challenges as they try to win a place in Finals Week.

10.05 **News** (T)
10.35 **Regional News** (T) Weather
10.45 **The Graham Norton Show** (T) Stars of screen, stage and song chat to Graham Norton.
11.35 **MOTD: Fifa World Cup 2022 Highlights** (T)
12.20 **MOTD World Cup Top 10: Upsets** (T) **12.50** MOTD: Fifa World Cup Replay 2022 (T) **2.30** Weather **2.35** News (T)

BBC Two

6.15 **Homes Under the Hammer** (T) (R) **7.15** Bargain Hunt (T) (R) **8.0** Sign Zone: Trawlermen - Hunting the Catch (T) (R) **9.0** News (T) **12.15** Politics UK (T) **1.0** FILM Heart of the Holidays (Corey Sevier, 2020) (T) **2.25** Beechgrove Repotted (T) (R) **2.45** MOTD Live: Fifa World Cup 2022 (T) Ghana v Uruguay (kick-off 3pm). **5.15** Flog It! (T) (R) **6.0** Richard Osman's House of Games (T) **6.30** Strictly: It Takes Two (T) **7.30** The One Show (T)

8.0 **Gardeners' World Winter Specials** (T) Monty Don harvests his favourite winter veg, and Joe Swift meets TV presenter AJ Odudu.

9.0 **Agatha Christie: Lucy Worsley on the Mystery Queen** (T) The historian examines the writer's mysterious disappearance in December 1926.

10.0 **QI** (T) Sandi Toksvig hosts.
10.30 **Newsnight** (T) Weather
11.05 **How to With John Wilson** (T)
12.0 **Frankie Boyle's New World Order** (R) **12.35** Lucy Worsley on the Mystery Queen (R) **1.35** Sign Zone: The Secret Genius of Modern Life (R) **2.35** A Wild Life **3.05** Louis Theroux Interviews … Bear Grylls **3.50** This Is BBC Two

ITV1

6.0 **Good Morning Britain** (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.30** News (T) **1.55** Local News (T) **2.0** James Martin's Great British Adventure (T) (R) **2.30** Tenable (T) (R) **3.30** Tipping Point (T) (R) **4.30** The Chase (T) (R) **5.30** Local News (T) **5.45** News (T) **6.15** Fifa World Cup 2022 (T) Cameroon v Brazil (kick-off 7pm).

9.15 **It'll Be Alright on the Night** (T) New series. David Walliams narrates clangers from Coronation Street, Bargain Hunt, Pointless, Never Mind the Buzzcocks and The Real Housewives of Cheshire.

10.20 **News** (T)
10.50 **Local News** (T) Weather
11.05 **The NFL Show** (T) New England Patriots v Buffalo Bills highlights.
12.0 **Shop: Ideal World 3.0** Keeping Up With the Aristocrats (T) (R) **3.50** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** James Martin's Great British Adventure (T) (R)

Channel 4

6.05 **Countdown** (T) (R) **6.45** Cheers (T) (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond (T) (R) **9.0** Frasier (T) (R) **10.30** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (T) (R) **11.25** News (T) **11.30** Chateau DIY (T) (R) **12.30** Steph's Packed Lunch (T) **2.10** Countdown (T) **3.0** A Place in the Sun (T) (R) **4.0** Sun, Sea and Selling Houses (T) (R) **5.0** Four in a Bed (T) (R) **5.30** Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **6.0** The Simpsons (T) (R) **6.30** Hollyoaks (T) (R) **7.0** News (T) **7.30** Unreported World (T)

8.0 **Grayson's Art Club: The Exhibition** (T) The series' third national exhibition, staged in Birmingham. Grayson Perry goes behind the scenes at the Midlands Art Centre.

9.0 **Gogglebox** (T) The regular gaggle of family and friends share their thoughts on a selection of shows.

10.0 **The Last Leg** (T)
11.05 **The Big Narstie Show** (T)
11.55 **Spaced** (T) (R) Daisy and Tim throw a housewarming party.
12.25 **Spaced** (T) (R) **1.50** FILM Misery (1990) (T) Oscar-winning thriller, starring Kathy Bates. **3.45** Kirstie's Handmade Christmas (T) (R) **4.0** Come Dine With Me (T) (R)

Channel 5

6.0 **Milkshake! 9.15** Jeremy Vine (T) **12.30** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun (T) (R) **1.25** News (T) **1.30** FILM Christmas Together (David DeCoteau, 2020) (T) **3.15** FILM Sugar Plum Christmas (Eric Close, 2021) (T) **5.0** News (T) **6.0** Holidaying With Jane McDonald: The Caribbean (T) (R) **7.0** Susan Calman's Grand Day Out (T) **7.55** News (T)

8.0 **The World's Most Expensive Christmas Cruise** (T) (R) Yuletide on the world's most expensive cruise ship, the Seven Seas Explorer.

9.0 **The Big Fight Live: Kelly v Williamson** (T) Coverage of the battle for the British Super Welterweight Championship, held in Newcastle.

11.05 FILM **Rise of the Footsoldier** (2007) (T) Fact-based crime thriller, starring Ricci Harnett and Craig Fairbrass.
1.25 **The Live Casino Show** (T) **3.25** Eggheads (T) (R) **4.15** The Funny Thing About Growing Up (T) (R) **5.05** Wildlife SOS (T) (R) **5.25** House Doctor (T) (R) **5.50** Pip and Posy (T) (R)

BBC Four

7.0 **Top of the Pops** (T) (R) Performances by M-People, U2 and Björk. **7.30** Top of the Pops (T) (R) Featuring Bad Boys Inc, Prince and Gabrielle.
8.0 **Top of the Pops** (T) (R) With Eddy Grant, AC/DC and the Boomtown Rats.

8.30 **Top of the Pops** (T) (R) Featuring Status Quo, Petula Clark and New Order.

9.0 **Elaine Paige at the BBC** (T) (R) A selection of archive performances by the West End star, including Don't Cry for Me Argentina.

10.0 **Elaine Paige: I'm Still Here** (T) (R) Highlights of the singer's farewell concert.
11.0 **Evita: The Making of a Superstar** (T) (R) Suzy Klein travels deep into the world of musical theatre in Argentina, to discover the story behind one of the West End's most celebrated characters.
12.0 **Peaky Blinders** (T) (R)

Other channels

BBC Three

7.0pm The Next Step **8.10** The Catch Up **8.15** Freeze: Back on Thin Ice **9.0** The Traitors **12.0** Bellator MMA

Dave

6.0am Teleshopping **7.10** Yianni: Supercar Customiser **7.35** Yianni: Supercar Customiser **8.0** Border Force: America's Gatekeepers **9.0** Border Force: America's Gatekeepers **10.0** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Oslo **10.30** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Madeira **11.0** Rick Stein: From Venice to Istanbul **12.0** Expedition With Steve Backshall **1.0** Cops on the Rock **2.0** Top Gear **3.0** Rick Stein's Taste of Shanghai **4.0** Top Gear **5.0** Top Gear **6.0** QI XL **7.0** Richard Osman's House of Games **7.40** QI **8.20** Would I Lie to You? **9.0** QI XL **10.0** We Are Not Alone **12.0** Mock the Week **12.40** Mock the Week **1.20** Alan Davies: As Yet Untitled **2.30** QI **3.0** Richard Osman's House of Games **3.35** The Indestructibles **4.0** Teleshopping

E4

6.0am Hollyoaks **7.0** Ramsay's 24 Hours to Hell and Back **8.0** Black-ish **9.0** How I Met Your Mother **10.0** The Big Bang Theory **11.0** Young Sheldon **12.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **12.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **1.0** The Big Bang Theory **1.30** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** The Big Bang Theory **2.30** The Big Bang Theory **3.0** The Goldbergs **3.30** The Goldbergs **4.0** Modern Family **4.30** Modern Family **5.0** The Big Bang Theory **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.0** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.0** Hollyoaks **7.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.0** Modern Family **8.30** Modern Family **9.0** Naked Attraction **10.0** Celebs Go Dating **11.0** FILM Mission: Impossible III (2006) **1.30** Celebs Go Dating **2.30** Celebrity First Dates **3.25** Below Deck **4.15** Ramsay's 24 Hours to Hell and Back **5.05** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine

Film4

11.0am FILM The Last Blitzkrieg (1959) Second world war drama, starring Van Johnson. **12.45** FILM Santa Fe Passage (1955) Western adventure, starring John Payne. **2.35** FILM Stalag 17 (1953) Second world war PoW drama, starring William Holden. **5.0** FILM The Long Arm (1956) Crime thriller, starring Jack Hawkins. **6.55** FILM Risen (2016) Biblical drama, starring Joseph Fiennes. **9.0** FILM Under Siege (1992) Action adventure, starring Steven Seagal. **11.05** FILM Planet Terror (2007) Premiere. Sci-fi thriller, starring Rose McGowan. **1.10** FILM The Cabin in the Woods (2012) Horror, starring Kristen Connolly

ITV2

6.0am Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **6.35** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **7.0** The Cabins **8.0** Love Bites **9.0** Love Bites **10.0** Dress to Impress **11.0** Dress to Impress **12.0** Rolling in It **1.0** Family Fortunes **2.0** Supermarket Sweep **3.05** One Tree Hill **4.0** Chuck **5.0** Chuck **6.0** Celebrity Catchphrase: Christmas Special **7.0** Dress to Impress **8.0** Bob's Burgers **8.30** Bob's Burgers **9.0** FILM Wedding Crashers (2005) **11.25** Family Guy **11.55** Family Guy **12.25** American Dad! **12.50** American Dad! **1.20** The Stand Up Sketch Show **1.50** The Stand Up Sketch Show **2.20** Hey Tracey! **3.0** Teleshopping

Sky Max

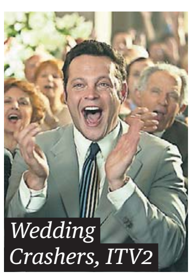
6.0am Arrow **8.0** DC's Legends of Tomorrow **9.0** The Blacklist **10.0** Supergirl **11.0** NCIS: New Orleans **1.0** Hawaii Five-0 **2.0** S.W.A.T **3.0** The Blacklist **4.0** DC's Legends of Tomorrow **4.55** Supergirl **5.50** Dating No Filter **6.20** NCIS: New Orleans **8.10** Rob & Romesh Vs West End **9.15** A League of Their Own **10.15** Resident Alien **11.15** The Russell Howard Hour **12.0** Banshee **1.10** The Force: Manchester **2.05** Road Wars **3.0** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** S.W.A.T **5.0** Highway Patrol

Sky Arts

6.0am Christmas at the Castle **7.15** Andrea Bocelli: Love in Portofino **9.0** Tales of the Unexpected **9.30** Tales of the Unexpected **10.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **10.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.0** Discovering: Christopher Plummer **12.0** The Grapes of Wrath: The Ghost of Modern America **1.0** Tales of the Unexpected **1.30** Tales of the Unexpected **2.0** Film Noir **3.0** Portrait Artist of the Year 2020 **4.0** Discovering: Jeff Bridges **5.0** Tales of the Unexpected **5.30** Tales of the Unexpected **6.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **6.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **7.0** Live from the Artists Den **8.15** Eric Clapton: Nothing But the Blues **10.30** Isle of Wight Festival 2022 **11.45** Isle of Wight Festival 2022 **12.45** The Who: Live at Kilburn 1977 **2.10** Suzi Q **4.10** Death Songbook **5.10** Video Killed the Radio Star **5.35** Chicago: Music Icons

Sky Atlantic

6.0am Storm City **7.45** Gomorrah **10.0** True Blood **12.15** Game of Thrones **1.20** True Detective **3.30** Gomorrah **5.45** True Blood **7.55** Game of Thrones **9.0** The Great Game **11.10** I Know This Much Is True **12.15** The Wire **3.30** In Treatment **4.0** Storm City


Wedding Crashers, ITV2

Radio

Radio 3

6.30am Breakfast **9.0** Essential Classics **12.0** Composer of the Week: Chopin (5) **1.0** Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert. The Consone Quartet, Radio 3 New Generation Artists, play Haydn's Frog Quartet and Mendelssohn's moving expression of grief at the death of his beloved sister, his Quartet op 80. (R) **2.0** Afternoon Concert. Ian Skelly rounds up his week of highlights from Bavaria with symphonies by Mozart and Strauss and with stormy music from Rossini and CPE Bach. **4.30** The Listening Service: Hallelujah! (R) **5.0** In Tune **7.0** In Tune Mixtape **7.30** Radio 3 in Concert. Edward Gardner conducts the London Philharmonic in Tippett's oratorio A Child of Our Time. **10.0** The Verb: Poetry Book Club with Douglas Dunn **10.45** The Essay: Listen Harder. Sophie Stone discusses finding a safe place to express emotions in the theatre. (5/5) **11.0** Late Junction. OKI and Cktrl in session. **1.0** Tearjerker With Sigrid. An hour of soothing music with the singer. **2.0** Downtime Symphony (R) **3.0** Through the Night

Radio 4

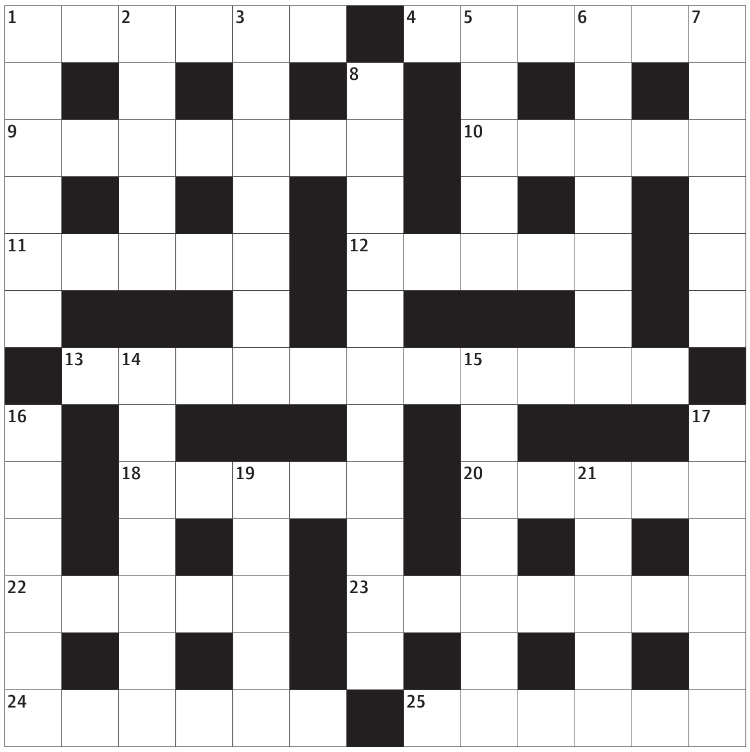
6.0am Today **8.31** (LW) Yesterday in Parliament **9.0** Desert Island Discs (R) **9.45** (LW) Daily Service **9.45** (FM) Book of the Week: How to Stand Up to a Dictator. By Maria Ressa. (5/5) **10.0** Woman's Hour **11.0** Britain's Communist Thread: The Party's Over. The ongoing influence of communism in Britain. (3/3) **11.30** Unite: The Party and the Proposal (R) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** FDR's Four Freedoms (R) **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One **1.45** Understand: The Economy - Inequality (10/10) **2.0** The Archers (R) **2.15** Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Firewall. Drama. By James Swallow. (1/8) **2.45** Why Do We Do That? (6/10) **3.0** Gardeners' Question Time **3.45** From Fact to Fiction (4/4) **4.0** Last Word **4.30** Feedback (8/11) **5.0** PM **5.54** (LW) Shipping Forecast **5.57** Weather **6.0** Six O'Clock News **6.30** The Now Show. With guest comedians Michelle De Swarte and Jamie MacDonald. (6/6) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Add to Playlist (9/9) **8.0** Any Questions? **8.50** A Point of View **9.0** Past Forward: A Century of Sound (6-10) **9.59** Weather **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime (R) **11.0** Americast **11.30** Today in Parliament **12.0** News and Weather **12.30** Book of the Week: How to Stand Up to a Dictator (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As BBC World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News Briefing **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Four Thought

Radio 4 Extra

6.0am Two Way Cut (4/4) **6.30** The Mind of Mr JG Reeder (4/4) **7.0** Romance and Adventure **7.30** Now You're Asking With Marian Keyes and Tara Flynn (9/10) **8.0** Parsley Sidings (1/10) **8.30** Married (4/6) **9.0** Act Your Age (1/6) **9.30** Bleak Expectations (3/6) **10.0** Barry Lyndon (2/2) **11.0** The Reunion (1) **11.45** David Attenborough's Life Stories **12.0** Parsley Sidings (1/10) **12.30** Married (4/6) **1.0** Two Way Cut (4/4) **1.30** The Mind of Mr JG Reeder (4/4) **2.0** Packing My Library (5/5) **2.15** Ordinary Heroes (5/5) **2.30** The Etymology of Entomology **3.0** Barry Lyndon (2/2) **4.0** Act Your Age (1/6) **4.30** Bleak Expectations (3/6) **5.0** Romance and Adventure **5.30** Now You're Asking With Marian Keyes and Tara Flynn (9/10) **6.0** Psycho (8/8) **6.15** The Haunting of Hill House (8/8) **6.30** Musical Genes (4/4) **7.0** Parsley Sidings (1/10) **7.30** Married (4/6) **8.0** Two Way Cut (4/4) **8.30** The Mind of Mr JG Reeder (4/4) **9.0** The Reunion (1) **9.45** David Attenborough's Life Stories **10.0** Now You're Asking With Marian Keyes and Tara Flynn (9/10) **10.30** Mitch Benn's Crimes Against Music (3/4) **11.0** Mark Thomas: The Manifesto (4/4) **11.30** James Acaster's Perfect Sounds **12.0** Psycho (8/8) **12.15** The Haunting of Hill House (8/8) **12.30** Musical Genes (4/4) **1.0** Two Way Cut (4/4) **1.30** The Mind of Mr JG Reeder (4/4) **2.0** Packing My Library (5/5) **2.15** Ordinary Heroes (5/5) **2.30** The Etymology of Entomology **3.0** Barry Lyndon (2/2) **4.0** Act Your Age (1/6) **4.30** Bleak Expectations (3/6) **5.0** Romance and Adventure **5.30** Now You're Asking With Marian Keyes and Tara Flynn (9/10)

Puzzles

Quick crossword no 16,403



Across
1 Astute (6)
4 Empty space (6)
9 eg a tele (anag) (7)
10 Lay to rest (5)
11 Authorisation (3-2)
12 Dish of grated potato (5)
13 Chairperson's ultimate power - Scott gave in (anag) (7,4)
18 Tiny bit (of comfort?) (5)
20 Place to 10 someone (5)
22 Get a whiff of (5)
23 Foul-smelling (7)
24 Tucks in clothing (6)
25 That's concerning! (2,4)

Down
1 One attracts attention when making one (6)
2 Kind of football (5)
3 Lacking (7)
5 Imperfectly (5)
6 Disentangle (7)
7 Demand for a particular product (6)
8 Fabric pattern (from a fish?) (11)
14 Impute (7)
15 In fashion (7)
16 Talk about people's private lives (6)
17 Surface gloss (6)
19 Not suitable (5)
21 Make up (for) (5)

Stuck? For help call 0906 200 83 83. Calls cost £1.10 per minute, plus your phone company's access charge. Service supplied by ATS. Call 0330 333 6946 for customer service (charged at standard rate).To buy puzzle books, visit guardianbookshop.com or call 0330 333 6846.

Sudoku no 5,875

Hard. Fill the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9.

		3				9		7
	5			9			3	
				5	3	2		6
	6		9				4	
		1						
	4		5				6	
				1	9	3		5
	7			3			9	
		2				6		4

Suguru

Fill the grid so that each square in an outlined block contains a digit. A block of 2 squares contains the digits 1 and 2, a block of three squares contains the digits 1, 2 and 3, and so on. No same digit appears in neighbouring squares, not even diagonally.

	2				
				5	
				4	2
				3	

Wordsearch

Can you find 15 gemstones in the grid? Words can run forwards, backwards, vertically or diagonally, but always in a straight, unbroken line.

G	E	N	I	R	T	I	C	D
A	L	R	S	L	Y	C	N	P
R	Y	Q	I	B	A	O	H	E
N	R	U	U	H	M	P	J	A
E	E	R	O	A	P	X	O	R
T	B	N	I	A	R	P	Q	L
S	Y	D	G	S	C	T	A	I
X	N	A	S	O	H	U	Z	S
I	T	E	M	E	R	A	L	D
E	T	O	P	A	Z	L	G	N
J	A	D	E	R	E	B	M	A

Yesterday's solutions

Sudoku no 5,874

4	3	7	9	6	1	5	8	2
9	1	5	8	2	7	3	4	6
6	2	8	4	3	5	1	7	9
7	9	3	2	5	4	8	6	1
2	6	4	1	7	8	9	3	5
5	8	1	3	9	6	7	2	4
1	4	6	5	8	3	2	9	7
3	7	2	6	1	9	4	5	8
8	5	9	7	4	2	6	1	3

Suguru

1	3	4	3	4	1
4	5	2	1	2	3
3	1	3	4	5	1
2	4	2	1	2	4
5	3	5	4	3	5
1	2	1	2	1	2

Wordsearch

L	D	W	I	F	E	N	C	E
A	R	A	O	A	E	T	O	S
E	C	E	U	P	L	N	U	U
O	C	H	H	G	T	U	S	O
B	D	E	I	T	H	A	I	P
R	W	R	I	L	A	T	N	S
O	A	S	E	N	D	F	E	O
T	A	P	D	N	A	R	G	R
H	N	S	I	B	L	I	N	G
E	O	L	T	E	L	C	N	U
R	S	I	S	T	E	R	A	B

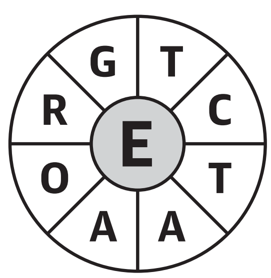
Solution no 16,402

■	O	C	C	U	P	Y	■	D	I	G	U	P
■	R	■	A	■	A	■	■	R	■	L	■	A
S	P	I	R	A	L	■	J	A	G	U	A	R
■	H	■	N	■	P	■	■	K	■	T	■	A
H	A	K	A	■	I	N	G	E	S	T	E	D
■	N	■	G	■	T	■	L	■	■	O	■	E
■	S	H	E	N	A	N	I	G	A	N	S	■
S	■	E	■	■	T	■	S	■	C	■	T	■
C	H	A	M	P	E	R	S	■	R	E	A	L
O	■	D	■	O	■	■	A	■	O	■	N	■
R	A	S	C	A	L	■	N	O	B	O	D	Y
C	■	E	■	C	■	■	D	■	A	■	B	■
H	I	T	C	H	■	W	O	R	T	H	Y	■

Word wheel
BACTERIUM

Word wheel

Find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the central letter and at least two others. Letters may be used only once. You may not use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one nine-letter word to be found. TARGET: Excellent-46. Good-38. Average-28.



Pet corner



Creme Puff, who died in 2005, is credited with being the oldest cat to have ever lived. How old was he?

a. 25
b. 31
c. 38
d. 45
*Answer top right**

Garry Trudeau
Doonesbury



TODAY'S PET CORNER ANSWER 38

Why should we rely on landlords being 'kind'? *Moya Lothian-McLean, page 3*

A race problem far bigger than Lady Hussey *Mandu Reid, page 4*

Christine McVie, Fleetwood Mac singer and songwriter *Obituaries, page 6*

G2 Daily pullout life & arts section *Inside*

The Guardian **Friday 2 December 2022**

Journal

Opinion and ideas



Russia is trying to freeze us into submission or death. It will fail

Andriy Yermak



The Holodomor is one of the most terrifying words ever coined: no movie or book can convey its horrors. Have you ever tried to imagine mass starvation? Millions of slow, torturous, painful deaths. It's difficult even to conceive of it – but it's there in the historical record. Picture it: people cling to life with all their dwindling might. They eat grass, leather boots, tree bark. They mix orach with pounded corn cobs. They grind millet husks with weeds, just to last a day longer. The foods are hardly chewable, and the human body cannot digest them, so people have constant stomach aches. They make the legs swell and the skin crack. Bodies lie in the streets. Some are missing flesh; it has obviously been cut off. Mothers lose their senses seeing their kids die.

Ukraine, for centuries the well-fed breadbasket of Europe, was transformed into hell 90 years ago. Having conquered our country – not for the first time – the Russians failed, once again, to subdue its people.

Between 1929 and 1932, a wave of peasant uprisings swept through Ukraine, then under Soviet rule – and the empire took revenge. It retaliated cruelly and cynically, taking food away from those who produced it. Years later, just as cruelly and cynically, the Soviet authorities sentenced the inhabitants of Leningrad to death by starvation. It's true that the German-Finnish offensive and blockade took many lives, but the Soviet regime was no less guilty: the blockade did not prevent deliveries from Leningrad's numerous military plants to the frontlines, but for some reason food supplies to the city were scarce.

Last weekend, Ukraine paused to mark the 90th anniversary of the Holodomor. Now, a new terror stalks our lands: the Kholodomor. Spelled with just one extra letter, this word means "death by freezing". The words "hunger" and "cold" sound similar in Ukrainian, and the outcome is the same. Have you ever tried to imagine mass death from freezing? Millions of slow, torturous, painful deaths – no movie or book can convey these horrors, either, and we don't even want to try to imagine them. But this is exactly the fate that the Russians are preparing for Ukraine today. For weeks now, with winter fast approaching, they have been peppering Ukraine's civilian energy infrastructure with hundreds of missiles.

One extra letter makes no difference to the aim; the passing of 90 years make no difference. The essence is the same:

Kateryna Sliusarchuk, 71, warms her house in Kherson using a burzhuika, a self-made welded metal stove
PHOTOGRAPH: ALESSIO MAMO

Andriy Yermak *is head of the Office of the Ukrainian Presidency*

Russia is trying to freeze us into submission or death. It will fail

Andriy Yermak

← *Continued from front*

genocide. The destruction of Ukraine, as an independent state, as a nation, as a free people. But again, the Kremlin's attempts to swallow our state, piece by piece, as it did a century ago, are failing.

We repelled the attack on Kyiv. We pushed back the invaders from Kharkiv. We reclaimed Kherson. Now we see panicking Russian troops building fortifications in Crimea, rightly fearing that we will retake it, too. Donetsk and Luhansk will also return to Ukraine.

The aggressor state's invasion was so pathetic that it has now chosen to follow the path of total terror. Turfed off the battlefields and fleeing from military combat, the Russian uniformed terrorists are now hitting Ukraine's critical infrastructure. The power grid is their primary target. A blatant war crime.

In the western media, we sometimes read that this Kremlin strategy is an attempt to force Ukraine to sue for peace. This analysis is not completely accurate. Putin does not just want Ukraine to capitulate - he wants us to beg for mercy. He needs more than just an end to the war. He wants a triumph that will humiliate Russia's enemies - not just Ukraine, but our western allies, too. The threat of humanitarian disaster that those Russian missiles carry serves the same purpose as the Holodomor 90 years ago: to subdue Ukraine, to break its ability to resist.

The Russian authorities mistakenly believe that Ukrainians will take to the Maidan (oh yeah, we always take to the Maidan!) in protests demanding an end to the war. The Russian authorities have far too long comforted themselves with the "one people" myth - that Ukrainians are essentially Russians. They do not understand that Ukrainians are different. We take to the streets because of injustice and the desire for freedom. We do not take to the streets to call for a future lived under the yoke of oppression.

Ukraine's annus horribilis has taken an even darker turn. We are one step away from massive blackouts as the freezing winter approaches. Our armed forces intercept most of Russia's missiles, but there are so many of them - several dozen in each salvo - and those that do hit are enough to leave millions of people dark and cold. Sometimes for hours, sometimes for days.

But darkness will always be better than slavery. To stay free, we need further help from our friends and allies. Immediately. Now. *Yesterday*. We need reliable protection for our skies. We need resources to restore the power grids. We need generators to keep people warm while emergency workers repair broken infrastructure. In short, we need the light of hope.

To end Ukrainian civilisation, Russia believes that terminating the power supply might be enough. But they are wrong. Civilisation ends at the point where such evil is born. Civilisation is over for Russia.



Civilians in the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut
PHOTOGRAPH: METIN AKTAS/ANADOLU AGENCY/GETTY

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'Comment is free… but facts are sacred' CP Scott

Housing

Neither the government nor the Tory rebels offer the homes Britain needs

The 2019 Conservative election manifesto was full of grand ambitions for expanding England's housing stock and improving access to the housing market. Planning regulations would be overhauled. At least a million more homes would be constructed by 2024; the goal was 300,000 a year by the middle of this decade. The homes would be beautiful, safe, environmentally friendly and affordable.

It was largely a fantasy. Today, the housing picture is abject, not sunny. The government's plans are stalled and the housing market is becoming ever more prohibitive. Much of the reason is economic. Higher interest rates, inflation and the cost of living crisis mean would-be buyers cannot enter the home-buying market. In the rental sector, ever larger number of tenants are in arrears and face eviction as benefits are frozen. Shelter warned this week that a million people are at risk of being forced on to the streets this winter.

But Britain is not building either. This isn't just a leftwing criticism. It's also the view of the former Conservative housing secretary Sajid Javid, writing last weekend. Over the past quarter-century, the failure of incomes to keep pace with costs has caused housing need to skew dramatically. Mr Javid points out that average house prices are now nine times average earnings; 25 years ago the multiple was 3.6 times. With mortgages harder to come by, rents are inevitably forced up. Although house prices have recently eased because of higher interest rates, this has become a generational social crisis.

It is a crisis that could be tackled much better. France, with a similar population, is building twice as many homes at present as Britain. This country could do the same as France. But Britain is paralysed by three things: its post-Thatcher reluctance to build adequate social housing, its dependence on a low-wage economy that prevents entry into either the private rental or ownership sectors and, most immediately, by the visceral dislike of significant numbers of Conservatives for effective planning rules.

As a result of the last, the government has found itself the hostage of MPs who want things to stay as they are. Backbench rebels, mainly from southern suburbs and towns, are threatening to amend the levelling-up and regeneration bill. They want to make Whitehall housing targets advisory, not mandatory, for local councils, and to allow councils to ban building on the green belt. They appear to have the power to halt the government's plans in their tracks.

The levelling up secretary, Michael Gove, is trying to find ways of buying off the revolt. One option he is examining is to restrict the option of turning new-builds into holiday rentals. Others include incentivising building on brownfield sites rather than greenfield ones, penalties on developers who wait for land prices to rise, and stronger rights to appeal against unpopular developments.

None of these approaches offer the real housing solutions to individual and community social needs that the situation requires. Instead, communities are often left with a choice between developers' interests and nimbyism. What Britain plainly needs is a mix that includes social and affordable housing of good quality and size, with proper community assets like schools, doctors and shops, and where residents are not so dependent on the motor car. But in the Britain of 2022 that more virtuous mix is simply not on offer.

Alzheimer's

An advance in treating an incurable disease is a medical landmark

Finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, is the holy grail of medical research. The incurable malady is - along with other dementias - the leading cause of death in the UK. Until now, no therapy had emerged that could even slow its lethal brain shrinkage, let alone stop or reverse its grim progression. Treating dementia has also been an underfunded cause. By some estimates, more research has been done on Covid in the past three years than on dementia in the past century. Yet this week, a drug that works for Alzheimer's has appeared on the horizon, raising hopes that there may be some relief from a deadly and cruel condition.

The drug, lecanemab, is a landmark in medicine, and the first treatment to slow cognitive decline in Alzheimer's patients. People understandably focus on breakthroughs that deliver a cure. Dementia is a frightening disease. It may begin innocuously enough, with a little forgetfulness. But the sickness gnaws away at a person's mental agility, their memory and ultimately their personality. Patients can end up delusional, incontinent and incapable of looking after themselves. Death arrives on average about eight years after the initial diagnosis. Lecanemab's effect is modest. In a clinical trial involving 1,800 patients in the early stages of Alzheimer's, the drug slowed its development over 18 months by about a quarter.

Some scientists say that while the results are statistically significant, individual patients might not perceive much - if any - difference. Others have questioned whether the drug's side-effects outweigh its benefits. The drug, significantly, points to a possible cause of the illness. The theory is that a protein, beta amyloid, and another it encourages, called tau, harm brain neurons to such an extent that they die off. Because lecanemab is an antibody therapy that removes beta amyloid, it provides a much-needed fillip for the hypothesis that the protein might be a key that could unlock Alzheimer's secrets.

This is no academic discussion. Between 2007 and 2019, more than a dozen final-stage trials of amyloid-targeting drugs reported results. None slowed cognitive decline; some even made it worse. When, last year, a therapy that targeted beta amyloid became the first new Alzheimer's drug in two decades to receive US approval, because it might help moderate symptoms, the decision became a flashpoint in a vexed scientific debate.

US regulators are expected to approve lecanemab for use in January. Britons will have to wait longer. First, UK medical watchdogs would have to judge the drug's safety, and then if its cost could be justified. If the benefits of lecanemab could be sustained, experts suggest, a patient might have seven and a half years of independent living - rather than the current six - before they need support at home. The arrival of dementia treatments will need more NHS resources. Hospitals would require accurate diagnostic tests to swiftly identify patients likely to benefit, specialist staff to provide regular drug infusions, and MRI scans to keep tabs on patient progress.

Dementia becomes more common in old age. As life expectancy rises, the number of people suffering with the illness will surge. This week's scientific advance is good news. Yet patients will still need to be cared for, often for many years. Dementia is perhaps the greatest medical and ethical challenge of the age. One can only hope that the British state, after a decade of ministers failing to fix the broken social care sector, is up to the test.



ILLLUSTRATION: BEN JENNINGS

Ben Jennings this week won the Low Trophy for Political Cartoonist of the Year for the second year in succession

Relying on our landlords being 'kind' is a feudal throwback

Moya Lothian-McLean



I am in the middle of a house move. It is not by choice. I am one of the thousands of renters in London facing eviction - although technically our landlord has simply decided not to renew our tenancy, a decision that doesn't seem to factor into official eviction stats, though it should, given the frequency with which it's occurring.

My landlord was one of that rare breed: the "good" landlords. You hear about them occasionally. Not a price gouger; fixes things when asked; doesn't treat tenants like squatters who happen to be paying half their monthly salary for the privilege of residing in their buy-to-let.

But without proper legal protections and rights for private tenants, such as rent caps, tenancy security even in cases of house sales, and the option of indefinite tenancies, all that separates a good landlord from a bad one is the wafer-thin concept of decency. Tenants are totally reliant on the whims and personal circumstances of their particular landlord. As such, privately renting is not just a financial and psychological burden, it is also a crash course in extensive relationship management.

See: putting off getting the boiler fixed because the washing machine was just replaced, and if you ask your landlord for two costly repairs in a row they might decide to sell. Or calling a house meeting to collectively draft an unfathomably sycophantic email two months before your contract renewal, essentially begging the landlord to grant you and your housemates the great honour of staying in their beautiful property. Sending them flowers, just because. (There is a housing crisis, and you need them to like you enough to ignore the estate agent in their ear telling them they can collect 30% more in monthly rent.)

And yet, at the slightest pressure, decency withers and dies. In September, my "good" landlord asked to increase the rent by a small and reasonable amount, in line with rising living costs (no word, of course, about decreasing the rate to mirror real-terms pay cuts). My housemates and I agreed, but requested the increase came into effect after 90 days, according to the terms of the contract we had signed, rather than immediately. The landlord pushed back, with an undertone of aggrievement that we would repay their kindness in such a fashion, and then went quiet. Days later, we were informed our tenancy was ending.

> **You are essentially begging the landlord to grant you the great honour of staying in their beautiful property**

Unspoken was the reality that by referencing the vulgar, transactional nature of the landlord/tenant relationship, we had pierced the gossamer veneer of civility. We had reminded our landlord that they were a landlord, and not simply a kind benefactor. It was ungrateful in the face of their generosity. Personal affront sealed our fate.

Where the state has withdrawn, I have noticed an increasing emphasis on interpersonal "decency" to one another, an exhortation to rely on a supposed inherent goodness that will see us all done right by. Perhaps the seeds of this rhetoric were first planted by David Cameron's vision of a "big society", which involved the cutting down of actual society, via slashed public spending, and its replacement with voluntarism. There is a cultural emphasis on being "kind" in lieu of solid legislative frameworks and state safety nets to catch us when we fall.

Often, it is those people with the most material power who preach this doctrine: at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, the then chancellor, Rishi Sunak, was instructing the public to practise "kindness" and "decency", and later refusing to overhaul statutory sick pay. Wealthy celebrities and influencers wield the phrase "Be kind" like a get-out-of-jail-free card at the slightest hint of criticism.

And there is a reliance on the individual compassion of the likes of landlords, in order to keep a roof over our heads. This "kindness" is a myth: it is bondage of a feudal nature, an exercise in massaging the egos - or should that be the consciences? - of those with assets and access in the hope that they will continue to patronise the rest of us.

Unfortunately, this vague folk concept of "kindness" disappears as soon as those at the top of the totem pole feel a squeeze; see landlords en masse increasing rental rates in line with their own living costs, never mind that some aren't even grappling with higher mortgage repayments and have more than enough of a financial cushion from the properties they let out.

It is understandable in times of crisis: a scarcity mindset becomes particularly sharp. The perception of being harder up, however, means kindness falls by the wayside. Self-preservation kicks in, and damn objectivity when it comes to assessing actual power dynamics.

"It's been a very difficult time for landlords, too," my friend was told earlier this year, after a rent increase on her mouse-infested flat. The landlord in question collects income from 11 properties. Under the decency doctrine, everyone's suffering is equal.

Keep your kindness. I would rather have housing security or the ability to easily book a GP appointment without relying on a sympathetic receptionist's pity when I turn up at the surgery in tears at 8am. "Decency" without the backing of robust welfare and legislative infrastructure is nothing but a farce, existing to alleviate the guilt of the haves in relation to the have-nots. It is a finite resource. The UK, it seems, is close to running on empty.

*

Moya Lothian-McLean *is a contributing editor at Novara Media*



A race problem far bigger than Lady Hussey

Mandu Reid



I generally avoid news about the royals. So it was a real eye-opener to find myself at the centre of a royal story. At a reception on Tuesday to honour those working to end violence against women and girls, I witnessed racist remarks from a member of the royal household directed at my friend and fellow activist, Ngozi Fulani. Lady Hussey's prolonged interrogation about where Ngozi was *really from,* what her *nationality* was and where her *people were from*, was not - as many people have insisted to me over the past 24 hours - the kind of well-meaning curiosity that all of us experience from time to time.

"Hackney" was Ngozi's answer, but Hussey refused to accept this. Her response implied that Black and brown people couldn't really be British. It implied that we were trespassing - and it made me reflect on the increasingly hostile environment of this disunited kingdom.

Even so, the media furore feels disproportionate, given the avalanche of huge stories you might expect to be dominating the news cycle. It's not that this one isn't serious. Racism always is, which is why I've spoken out. But something about this media frenzy feels … off. Even as I write this, interview requests are coming in faster than I can say no to them.

The initial calls I received were from journalists not looking for my account, but my *corroboration*. It took some time to realise that it was the very fact that the incident had been "witnessed" that made it significant, and forced the palace to respond swiftly (and, in my view, unsatisfactorily). Unlike when the Duchess of Sussex made her accounts of royal racism, such as the "concerns" that were expressed over how dark her son's skin might be, the palace wasn't able to deny or deflect this time. It couldn't rerun the famous line that "recollections may vary", because three of us have identical, and identically uncomfortable, recollections of that encounter.

Soon after the first media reports were published, the palace announced that Hussey had resigned. This is a gambit that I have become increasingly familiar with since the Women's Equality party started campaigning against police misogyny. What I've learned is that the "bad apple" narrative is potent not only because it masquerades as taking responsibility without the institution having to do any such thing, but also because it often helps drive a backlash against the "woke brigade" for cancelling yet another innocent. I see that "She's 83" is now trending on Twitter, imploring us to leave this nice old lady alone, a stance that adds a dash of ageism to the racism that has pervaded much of the commentary.

The funny thing is, neither Ngozi nor I wanted Hussey to receive the grand order of the boot. Ngozi didn't even name her publicly; it was social media that did this, immediately seizing on the story as another chance for people to form into polarised rival camps. Instead of stepping down, Hussey should be encouraged to step up, along with senior members of the royal household. This is much bigger than one individual: blaming Hussey risks minimising and distracting from the depth and breadth of racism that is enshrined in an institution that carries the heritage of empire, slavery and inequality.

Buckingham Palace trumpets its commitment to diversity and inclusion on its website. In a statement on Wednesday, it promised to remind staff of its policies. That's a big ask when its own annual reports show a lack of diversity among the upper echelons of its staff. The palace's history is dotted with failures of inclusion. Still, it's not the worst of the royal courts. Anecdotal evidence suggests that honour falls to Kensington Palace, which didn't even release this data in its last annual report.

Perhaps a starting point for an institution where staff think it's OK to touch a Black woman's hair or question her belonging would be signing up to cultural competence training. I know just the organisation to provide that. Sistah Space, the charity Ngozi runs to support African and Caribbean-heritage women affected by domestic and sexual abuse, offers such courses to institutions that don't know where to begin.

Wouldn't it be something if Buckingham Palace asked for its help? It would certainly chime with the Queen Consort's speech at the reception, in which she said that the starting point for responding to survivors of abuse was listening to them and believing them. Perhaps, one day, that principle could extend to Meghan too.

*
Mandu Reid *is leader of the Women's Equality party*

Established 1906

Country diary

Spurn Point, Yorkshire

It's possibly odd to suggest that this three-mile-long finger of sand, marram grass and buckthorn spine all pointing toward oblivion in the North Sea is my key foundational landscape. Because, in truth, I'd neglected to visit for 45 years.

Throughout my youth, this rather unloved fragment of Holderness, with its flattened geometry of pasture, hedge and wartime tank trap, was the map on which most of my dreams were fixed. It's where I recorded a first migrant whimbrel, and heard my first grey plover, that exquisite piped note coming like liquid melancholy out of the Humber mist. I recall clearly the moment, aged 13, when I laid eyes for the first time on a golden oriole. For goodness sake, here also is where I met my first red-legged partridges.

It's now stranger to describe Spurn as foundational, given that it's the most rapidly eroding British coastline. For many of us, favourite places are the fixed points against which we chart our own wanderings, but when I returned this month, while I seemed almost the same, Spurn was weirdly unfamiliar. Gone were the tank blocks, the lighthouse cottages and not just the old wartime railtrack to Spurn Point but the road itself, along with many of its sea defences and even whole fields.

The most telling is a wall plaque at the old Bluebell shop (now cafe), which commemorated its distance from the sea in 1847: 532 yards. A 1994 inscription adjusted it to 190 yards and I paced it out to the tideline to bring the figure up to date: 135 steps.

Some things at Spurn are not changed. It's still the most wonderful mainland location to observe bird migration, and twice every day the tide withdraws deep into the Humber, leaving an immense plain of mud, dotted with millions of wormcasts, where 135,000 waterbirds still come to feed. Yet there was one micro-change we delighted to note. In 1880, the naturalist John Cordeaux described how, as the "sun dips beyond the western world … the oozy mudflats are purple with reflected light". We logged the colour as a pale orange marble.
Mark Cocker

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The decline and fall of the established church

The story of Jesus began with a state census, so the current debate on disestablishment of the Church of England has a sense of deja vu (The census is clear: let's end state religion, 1 December). Like the biblical census, this one is pregnant with unexpected possibilities.

As a paid-up Anglican and contributor to developing church leadership at both parish and national levels, I passionately believe that the C of E needs to commit not to argue or lobby for any place in a reformed legislature. Instead we should use our historic privilege to encourage the wider debate so badly needed about our inadequate national governance. For example, how many of those who took part in the census believe in a mainly appointed crony upper house with a side serving of aristocracy? Designing a new upper house cannot be entrusted wholly to party politicians, but bishops could only play a useful part if they eschew any claim to preserving their own place in the House of Lords.

If they did that, the country might even conclude that some modest multi-faith representation wasn't a daft idea. Most likely we wouldn't end up in that place, but you never know. What I do know, as a Christian, is that a church focused on entrenching historic privilege has lost touch with the historic Jesus and outlived its usefulness to the divine Christ.
Dr Douglas Board
Visiting professor, University of Chichester

● Simon Jenkins can't have it both ways. If the response to declining Christian identity should be deinstitutionalisation of the Church of England, why should its assets be taken over by "town councils" and others? Church buildings represent so much more than a property portfolio. They are places of memory, of celebration, of heritage, and witnesses to the faith and energy of those who built and maintained them.

I agree with Jenkins on this: we need local solutions to the repurposing of a church building no longer required – or affordable – for worship. And churches across denominations should be coming together to think ahead with local partners and with local participation to determine new uses of these community assets for community benefit. And these uses should not exclude spaces for those seeking to explore faith, spirituality and meaning.
Rev Dr Lisa Curtice
Glasgow

● I was intrigued by the comments of Dr Scot Peterson, a scholar of religion and the state at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, who stated that having the king as head of an established church made better sense in 1650 (Calls grow to disestablish Church of England as Christians become minority, theguardian.com, 29 November).

In 1649, parliament had cut off the king's head and disestablished the church of England. I suspect that Dr Peterson may have found his comments strongly challenged in year one of the Commonwealth, the only time we have been a republic. Establishment made less sense then than today.
Right Rev Gregory K Cameron
Bishop of St Asaph (in the disestablished Church in Wales)

● While Charles III has already said that he will serve people "whatever may be your background and beliefs", how will he and his archbishop of Canterbury square that with the coronation day oaths in a Church of England that still won't marry same-sex couples?
Jackie Robertson
London

Education secretary's empty funding boast

My husband and I, both retired teachers, couldn't believe it when we read Gillian Keegan's boast that after 12 long years of underfunding and depredation, she was proud to get school funding back to where Labour left it (We're doing our best for schools. We don't need strike threats, 26 November). I was a primary school teacher during the last Labour government, and I remember the new money to spend on books, computers and staffing.

I also remember shedding tears when a visiting speaker showed us a big book and told us how the new national literacy strategy would foster a love of reading and writing instead of the emphasis on grammar we had had previously.

Keegan describes education as a "magic bullet" to transform lives; in Tory hands, it's a bullet in the heart for our education system.
Gill Vincent
Sheffield

● Gillian Keegan explains how much she owes her career to the hard work and dedication of Mr Ashcroft, a teacher she had when she was doing her O-levels. He "changed the course of my life," she says. It is clear that without his intervention she would not be in the position she is in now – a position that gives her power over how the likes of him are rewarded for what they do day in, day out.

If she had the chance to speak to Mr Ashcroft today to thank him, how would she explain the fact that her party has cut the real-terms pay of teachers consistently since 2010?
Shaun Soper
Midhurst, West Sussex

● As I read the article in which the secretary of state for education heaped fulsome praise on teachers, I immediately thought of the nurses' slogan: "Claps don't pay bills."
Mike Lee
Ramsbottom, Greater Manchester

With bills soaring, we are existing, not living

My heart goes out to Sharron Spice (I work 50 hours a week and I'm still in arrears on my council tax. What more can I do?, theguardian.com, 30 November). As I type this, my hands are frozen from having no heating in the house.

I wrote to our local MP, and received a courteous letter back; it states what measures the government has put in place for the country, adding that "the Government cannot pay for everything for everyone", but there is no emotion. The letter never says what they haven't done or could still do to help, only that they have to take difficult decisions.

To help with energy prices, surely the answer is not to put them up but to perhaps reduce the standing charge for a set period of time. Council tax should surely be frozen for the coming year as councils will naturally use the 4.99% increase in its entirety if they are allowed to. We will not get the economy back up and running if prices are constantly raised.

I have done everything I can to reduce my heating and food costs, but it is still ever so expensive for us. We are existing, not living.

Our local Tory council even raised our car parking charges, just before Christmas, and says on its website that if you need help with the cost of living, "let us know".

I have been a staunch Tory voter all my life, but cannot support a party that really does not think of the people, but only to balance the books at the moment. I cry myself to sleep each evening, while they are warm and fed. The MPs will not think of me, but I think of them.
Helena Parker
Binfield, Berkshire

Corrections and clarifications

● **Emma Raducanu was the first British woman to win a grand slam title since Virginia Wade in 1977, not 1997 as we said in a picture caption (Net profit, 30 November, p11).**

● **A TV review of the first episode of Simon Schama's History of Now described George Orwell as "being on the wrong end of fascist lies", when Stalinist lies was meant (The heart is in the right place. But where's the nuance?, 28 November, G2, p10).**

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Send Xmas cards via Japan to save money

Next year I will ask my son to take all my pre-written Christmas cards to Japan with him on his annual visit to his in-laws. Why? Because, if he then posts them back to the UK via airmail, it will cost me 110 yen per card – about 66p. Second class mail in the UK is 68p. I will, therefore, save 2p per card – not a huge saving, perhaps, but the bonus would be that my friend who lives 40 miles north of me will get a card with a Japanese stamp on it. It's a win-win situation.
Pamela Brice
Torphins, Aberdeenshire

● Amid the hand-wringing regarding a lack of ethnic diversity in Love Actually (Report, 1 December), Richard Curtis makes no acknowledgment of the crass sexism that runs as a constant theme throughout the film.
Chris Jones
Liverpool

● Twenty years after its making, Richard Curtis says Love Actually is "bound … to feel out of date". Having Colin Firth use the phrase "total spaz" suggests it was 30 years out of date when it was made.
Chris Garratt
Nottingham

● I realised that Scots was different to English when I arrived in London and asked an assistant "Where do I pay?" Shocked, she replied: "I'm sorry, madam, there's no toilet here!" Still Scottish and proud of my accent, though (Letters, 29 November).
Heather Connon
Bewdley, Worcestershire

● Among the 15 family members in your Wordsearch (1 December), I was pleased to see you that had included a bonus word for Welsh speakers: *nain* (grandma).
Scott Saunders
Bangor



McVie, second left, with her fellow Fleetwood Mac members circa 1977. From left, Lindsey Buckingham, Mick Fleetwood, Stevie Nicks and John McVie, Christine's ex-husband
MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY

Christine McVie

Fleetwood Mac singer and keyboard player who wrote many of their best-known songs

Fleetwood Mac were Brit-rock stalwarts when, in 1974, they hit on the idea of pepping up their lineup. They invited a folky Californian, Lindsey Buckingham, to join, but he refused to come without his girlfriend, Stevie Nicks. The band agreed, on one condition: their sole female member, Christine McVie, had to feel comfortable with Nicks.

They met over dinner in Los Angeles, and McVie, finding Nicks "funny and nice, but also, there was no competition", waved her through. That decision led to the enlarged band becoming the sultans of soft rock, underlining McVie's status as the quiet pillar of the Mac apparatus. (And she was right; Nicks complemented rather than competed. She was the ethereal conjuror, McVie the "very, very, very English" - in Nicks's appraisal - countermeasure, and neither ever upstaged the other.)

McVie, who has died aged 79, was co-lead singer, keyboardist and author of many of the group's canonical tunes, including Say You Love Me, Over My Head and You Make Loving Fun. Understatement shaped her identity, with Rolling Stone magazine rather insultingly calling her "the epitome of rock'n'roll sanity". That kind of thing riled her: "I was probably the most restrained, but I was no angel," she protested, claiming that one of her most acclaimed compositions, Songbird, owed its existence to "a couple of toots of cocaine and a half-bottle of champagne".

> **She only became interested in rock at 15 and was an instant convert to the blues**

Nevertheless, she avoided the spotlight, often literally. At gigs her domain was a relatively modest keyboard set-up at the side, safely away from centre stage, and despite her talent - "the finest blueswoman and piano player in all of England," the drummer, Mick Fleetwood, maintained - she was self-deprecating about her abilities.

Deeply melodic love songs, burnished by her warm alto, were McVie's stock-in-trade, but she could address her unhappy ex-husband, John McVie, with equal tenderness. The 1977 Top 3 hit Don't Stop, later used as the theme tune for Bill Clinton's first presidential campaign, did just that. Written during sessions for the landmark Rumours album, when relations between the pair were at their worst, it sunnily encouraged John, the band's bassist, to look forward rather than brood about the past. (She blamed their periodic breakups, culminating in divorce in 1976, on the stress of being in the same group, and her husband's heavy drinking: "John is not the most pleasant of people when he's drunk," she said in 2003. "I was seeing more Hyde than Jekyll.")

She didn't deliberately write commercial songs, she insisted; they just came out that way. Which was just as well - in 1975, as the group were grinding through an American tour, their US label chose Over My Head to soundtrack a radio campaign for their self-titled new album. The LP duly became their first real smash, selling more than 9m copies. For that matter, the 1977 behemoth Rumours arguably owed a good chunk of its 45m sales to the two McVie tracks released as singles, Don't Stop and You Make Loving Fun, which remain soft-rock touchstones to this day.

The younger child of Cyril Perfect, a music teacher, and his wife, Beatrice (nee Reece), Christine was born in Bouth, then part of Lancashire and now in Cumbria, and raised in Bearwood, West Midlands. Her mother's avocation was spirituality and Christine was uncomfortable around her circle of faith-healer friends, but an even heavier burden was being saddled with the name Christine Perfect. "Teachers would say: 'I hope you live up to your name, Christine.' So, yes, it was tough." She so disliked it that after her divorce she kept her married name.

As a child, she studied classical piano and cello, only becoming interested in rock at 15, when her brother left Fats Domino sheet music on the household piano. She was an instant convert to the blues, developing a driving, boogie-woogie left-hand piano style, but music became secondary to her other consuming interest, art. Five years at Birmingham Art College yielded a sculpture degree, but she emerged with a revived passion for music, thanks to having spent her university time busking with her friend Spencer Davis and playing bass in a band called Sounds of Blue, led by Stan Webb.

Listlessly working as a window dresser at Dickins & Jones department store in London after graduation, Christine was delighted to be asked to join Webb's new outfit, Chicken Shack, as keyboardist and vocalist. One of the only women in the mid-1960s British blues scene to both sing and play an instrument, she got noticed. Though she later dismissed Chicken Shack as a "mediocre sort of white blues band", she sang lead on their only Top 20 song, a dreamy cover of Etta James's I'd Rather Go Blind, and was voted Melody Maker's top female vocalist of 1969 (she won the same award in 1970, after releasing a solo album entitled Christine Perfect).

She fancied the guitarist Peter Green of the rival blues act Fleetwood Mac, but it was John McVie who asked her out. "It was Peter Green I had a bit of an eye on," she said during a Desert Island Discs broadcast in 2017. "I started talking to John and fell head over heels with him." They married in 1968 and, a few months later, deciding she was not seeing enough of her husband, she left Chicken Shack with the intention of being a housewife. It lasted only until her manager persuaded her to make the

solo LP, an "immature" effort she later preferred to forget. The next step was joining Fleetwood Mac as a permanent member in 1970, having already played uncredited on several studio sessions.

She was dubious about the band's decision to relocate to Los Angeles in 1974, but reconciled herself to Californian rock-star life, buying Anthony Newley's old house and a pair of Mercedes-Benzes with her lhasa apso dogs' names on the number plates. While making the follow-up to Rumours, Tusk, she dated the Beach Boy Dennis Wilson, but her next significant relationship, with the Portuguese keyboardist Eddy Quintela, was happier and more productive. He played on her second solo album, Christine McVie (1984), and after their marriage in 1986 the pair wrote one of Mac's biggest hits of the 80s, Little Lies. The marriage foundered, however, when McVie found herself craving a quiet life in England; she quit the band in 1998 and bought a Tudor house in Wickhambreaux, Kent.

Fifteen years of "this country life with the welly boots and the dogs and the Range Rover" proved enough, and matters came to a head when she fell down a flight of stairs and became dependent on prescription painkillers. It was, she said, a bleak time, not least because another attempt at a solo career had failed to launch. She had made the album In the Meantime with her nephew, Dan Perfect, in 2004, purposely veering away from Fleetwood Mac's big-ticket lushness. But without it, the relaxed, mid-tempo songs had little zing; moreover, a fear of flying kept her from travelling to promote it. Innately a team player, after therapy to overcome her phobia she rejoined Mac permanently in 2014.

Reaction to her return was roaringly positive from fans and the band; to Mick Fleetwood, it made the group "complete" again. In the same year, she received an Ivor Novello lifetime achievement award. McVie's last recording was a self-titled joint album with Buckingham, a Top 5 British hit in 2017. It caught her in a reflective mood but her gift for melody was undimmed. Her final public performance was at a tribute to Green in London in February 2020.

In June this year, a solo compilation, Songbird, was released, but McVie was adamant that she wouldn't tour again. "I don't feel physically up for it. I'm in quite bad health. I've got a chronic back problem, which debilitates me. I stand up to play the piano, so I don't know if I could actually physically do it."

She and Quintela divorced in 2003. Her brother, John, and nephew survive her.
Caroline Sullivan

Anne Christine McVie, musician, born 12 July 1943; died 30 November 2022

Maurice Norman

England footballer and mainstay of the Spurs side that won the double in 1960-61

The footballer Maurice Norman, a tall, powerfully built defender, who has died aged 88, was a mainstay of Tottenham Hotspur's famous double-winning team of 1960-61 and played 23 times for England – including in the 1962 World Cup – before his career was ended prematurely by injury in a friendly match in 1965.

While at Spurs, Norman played first at right-back and then more notably at centre-half, where he was dominating in the air and a powerful tackler on the ground. He played his first game for the north London club in 1955 and remained at White Hart Lane for a decade, making 411 appearances, 357 of them in the league.

In the process he became a key member of Bill Nicholson's great side that won both Division One and the FA Cup in 1960-61, retained the FA Cup in 1962 and won the 1963 European Cup Winners' Cup final (5-1 against Atlético Madrid).

Born in Mulbarton, Norfolk, Norman played for Norfolk Schools and started with the local junior side, Mulbarton FC, and Wymondham Minors FC. He was spotted by a Norwich City scout playing on the Mulbarton village green and was signed up in 1952. The Norwich manager Norman Low, himself once a useful centre-half, extolled him as "the best Norwich discovery since Alf Kirchen", referring to a famed outside-right of the 1930s and 40s.

"He was working as a farmhand but a generous employer gave him time off to play

Norman was then working as a farmhand but was able to pursue his footballing dreams thanks to a generous employer, who gave him time off to play. In 1998 he told the Eastern Daily Press: "There were times when I'd play for Norwich, miss the last bus back and have to walk the five miles back home. I'd be feeding pigs at midnight."

In 1955, after 35 league appearances for Norwich, Norman was transferred for the substantial sum of £28,000 to Spurs, where his teammates fondly nicknamed him "the Swede" because of his agricultural background. In an interview to mark his 80th birthday in 2014, Norman recalled arriving for his first match that November: "Until then, I had never been to London and it was very strange finding my way around. Then, when I walked into the dressing room for the first time and saw the other players, many of whom were internationals, I really wondered what I was doing there. I really was overawed."



Norman, in white, playing for Tottenham Hotspur against Birmingham City at White Hart Lane in 1956. He said he 'really was overawed' when he joined Spurs from Norwich TOPICAL PRESS AGENCY/GETTY

He was a member of the England squad for the 1958 World Cup finals in Sweden, but did not get a game and had to wait another four years before he was at last capped for England, in the same game that featured the England debut of the future World Cup-winning captain, Bobby Moore. That was a friendly against Peru in Lima on the way to the 1962 World Cup finals in Chile, in which both players would figure.

Norman played in all England's four games there. In the last, against Brazil, in the quarter-final in Viña del Mar, he was famously outjumped at a corner by the remarkable Brazilian winger Garrincha, at 5ft 7in, who headed his team's first goal. He would keep his England place until December 1964.

Norman described his Spurs double-winning teammates as "like one happy family", and thought that continuity played a large part in their success: "I think we felt almost invincible. We rarely looked at a team sheet to see who we would be playing because we had only used 15 players during those seasons."

Alas, his White Hart Lane career came to a miserable end in the course of a game against a Hungarian Select XI, in November 1965, when Norman broke his left leg. After a year in plaster, followed by an operation in which his leg was rebroken, in 1967 he announced his retirement.

Thereafter Norman worked in various jobs: at a petrol station in Southgate, north London; as a mail order sports outfitter in Frinton on Sea, Essex, where, with his wife, Jacqueline, he also ran a haberdashery outlet, the Wool Shop; and as a gardener at Wickham Market in Suffolk.

He is survived by Jacqueline (nee Knight), a former nurse, whom he married in 1961, and their son, Michael, and daughter, Johanna, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.
Brian Glanville

Maurice Norman, footballer, born 8 May 1934; died 27 November 2022

Birthdays

TC Boyle, writer, 74; **Brendan Coyle**, actor, 59; **Mary Creagh**, former chief executive, Living Streets, and former Labour MP, 55; **Mike England**, former footballer and manager, 81; **Alfie Enoch**, actor, 34; **Nelly Furtado**, singer and songwriter, 44; **Sir David Green**, former director general, British Council, 74; **Craig Hassall**, chief executive, Royal Albert Hall, 58; **Patricia Hewitt**, former Labour MP and cabinet minister, 74; **James Lancelot**, former master of the choristers and organist, Durham Cathedral, 70; **Lucy Liu**, actor, 54; **Tom McGuinness**, guitarist, 81; **Ann Patchett**, author, 59; **George Saunders**, writer, 64; **Monica Seles**, tennis player, 49; **Jenny Lee Smith**, golfer, 74; **Britney Spears**, singer, 41; **Penelope Spheeris**, film director, 77; **Jan Ullrich**, cyclist, 49; **Mary Ward**, co-founder, ambassador and guardian, Chickenshed Theatre Company, 78; **Chris Wolstenholme**, bassist, 44.

Announcements

In Memoriam

MALEED, Helen, 31/03/1967 - 02/12/2010. Love Dave xxx.

For Announcements, Acknowledgments, Adoptions, Anniversaries, Birthdays, Births, Deaths, Engagements, Memorial Services and In Memoriam, email us at announcements@theguardian.com including your name, address and telephone number or phone 0203 353 2114.

Puzzles

Yesterday's solutions

Killer sudoku
Easy

3	6	7	4	9	1	8	2	5
4	5	2	7	6	8	1	9	3
8	9	1	3	5	2	7	4	6
1	4	6	9	3	5	2	7	8
2	7	5	6	8	4	3	1	9
9	3	8	2	1	7	6	5	4
7	2	3	5	4	6	9	8	1
6	8	4	1	2	9	5	3	7
5	1	9	8	7	3	4	6	2

Medium

3	4	2	6	1	8	5	7	9
7	9	6	2	5	4	3	8	1
8	1	5	3	7	9	6	2	4
9	2	1	5	4	6	7	3	8
5	3	4	1	8	7	9	6	2
6	7	8	9	2	3	1	4	5
4	8	9	7	3	5	2	1	6
2	5	7	4	6	1	8	9	3
1	6	3	8	9	2	4	5	7

Codeword



Cryptic crossword
Solution No. 28,929

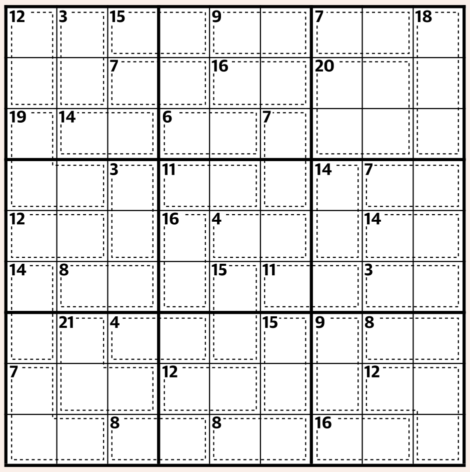


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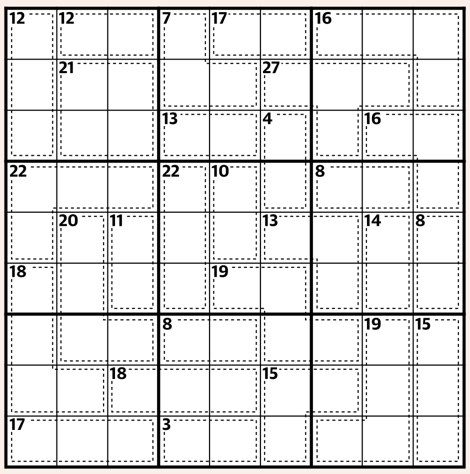
Killer sudoku

Easy

The normal rules of Sudoku apply: fill each row, column and 3x3 box with all the numbers from 1 to 9. In addition, the digits in each inner shape (marked by dots) must add up to the number in the top corner of that box. No digit can be repeated within an inner shape.

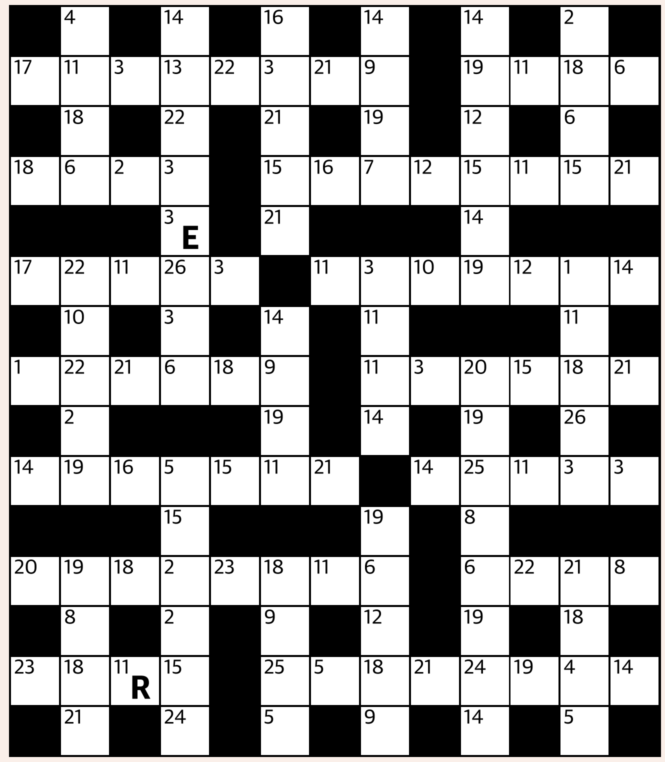


Medium

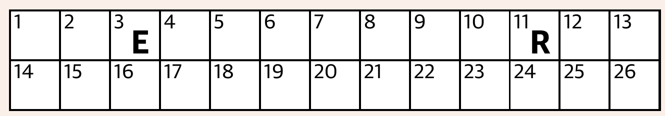


Codeword

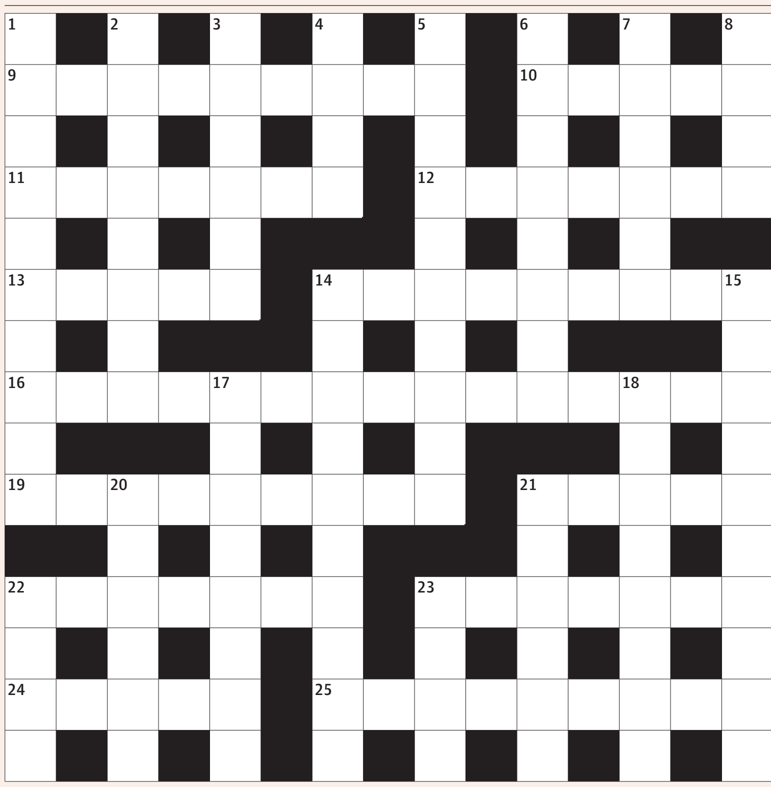
Each letter of the alphabet makes at least one appearance in the grid, and is represented by the same number wherever it appears. The letters decoded should help you to identify other letters and words in the grid.



A B C D ~~E~~ F G H I J K L M N O P Q ~~R~~ S T U V W X Y Z



Guardian cryptic crossword No 28,930 set by Harpo



Across

9 Mike and Heather enthralled by an advanced style of country music? (9)
10 Fast vehicle ditched by Shell? (5)
11 Knitter knitted knick-knack (7)
12 Excel is almost certain to change (7)
13 Force trainee to execute 'duck and cover', primarily when retreating (5)
14 Old New Zealand admiral on manoeuvres (9)
16 Literary adventurer disturbed lingerer grabbing tool for opening letter (9,6)
19 Condition may seem poor around edges of pitch (9)
21 Nine divine females married pursuers off and on (5)
22 Notice call to work (5-2)
23 Handcuff a salt arrested by setter (7)
24 Wrestler returned inside box-like zone (5)
25 Mobile meters, say — one way to repay debt (4,5)

Down

1 Tiny piece about centrally stripped grammatical form (10)
2 Confuse order to let one's hair down? (8)
3 Mostly wonderful, tense batter's innings (6)
4 Engineer, eh? So it's said (4)
5 Character in Othello reported noble group of stars (10)
6 Damn shower beginning to irritate Gulf national (8)
7 Covering of slate on a dam (6)
8 Extremely fickle twin sons own up (4)
14 Spell in which nobody gets the runs (6,4)
15 Style doctor introducing several points (5,5)
17 Alcohol clergy bottled at home (8)
18 Lock web address after X linked to copyright (4-4)
20 Beggar's right to stop one who'll cough up (6)
21 Tiny setter's amphibian is caught (6)
22 Catch punch (4)
23 Bible book briefly picked up before end of religious service (4)